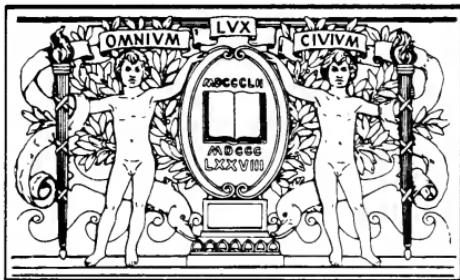


SADDLER
& WINTER'S
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JUNE.

BY MARY ROBERTS.

LET us walk beside the river, flowing in its own calm, silent beauty, and reflecting the summer-clouds as they sail majestically through the heavens. On its margin grow tall bullrushes, and willow herbs, marsh marigolds, and St. John's wort, with their reddish-yellow blossoms opening only to the sunbeams; and, as if calmly resting on their oars, white water-lilies, beautiful as those which crowd the little bays and inlets of the Alpine lakes, are seen on either side. Their snow-white globes float on the bosom of broad leaves, and beneath them the speckled trout often swim for shelter, when storms or a swiftly passing boat disturb the surface of the stream. Very pleasant, in this warm month, is the fresh breeze that comes from off the water, and soothing is it to watch the tranquil current thus gliding on, undisturbed by rocks or eddies.

There is the stile and narrow path that leads into the meadow, through which the river winds. Yesterday the grass stood thick, moonflowers, and ragged-robin, buttercups, meadow-sweets, and cuckoo-flowers, lifted their heads above the undulating verdure. Field-mice dwelt safely, and brought up their young; and the field-lark built her simple nest beside some over-arching tuft, and soared and warbled in the early morning, when scarcely the wakeful labourer was abroad: butterflies flitted from one flower to another, and bees went in and out to visit the fragrant clover. But now the success of the rapid scythe is laying the herbage low. What a deep, still sound it is! for the men are too intent upon their work to talk, and no other noise is heard, except the gentle ripple of the quiet river. A beautiful array of flowers falls at every stroke, while the rich grass, sinking before the scythes of the strong mowers, settles in waves one beyond the other. We might gather a bouquet of wild flowers from off those waves, for the sun has not yet withered them.

The field is large. It will take a long day, perhaps, even more, to cut down the whole. We cannot wait much longer, pleasant as it is to watch the mowers; but we will go a little further up the hill, and turn into Farmer Welford's field, where we shall find something more going on, for his grass was cut last week.

What a cheerful and merry scene! Few country sights are more pleasing than a field with haymakers at work. It was sad to see

the grass and wild-flowers falling before the rapid scythe—to think of the field-larks' nest, and the distress of the poor little mice driven in a moment from their homes; to think, too, that dull winter must pass over us before we can see again bright flowers in the same green meadow! But here all is joyous.

The haymakers work blithely, tossing about the grass, and talking and laughing right merrily. This is a holyday, both for old and young. Many who are employed in manufactures, with their wives and children, obtain leave to work in the fields when hands are scarce; and the doing so seems like a new life to them. You may see at the further end, hillocks of grass thrown up in long rows; the haymakers call them wind-cocks; they are piled light and high, that the wind may blow through them; but in this part of the field people are tossing the hay about. Grey-headed old men are here, aged women, and children, seemingly without number. Their parents are hard at work, and very glad are they to put the "wee things" in safe keeping among the old folks, who yet can help a little. Look at those girls and boys at play—see how they pelt one another with the hay, and roll each other over upon the grass—these are happy days. See those youngsters, scarcely able to totter, how they tumble on the sweet, fresh grass; while those who have strength to handle the rake mimic the labours of their parents, and draw tiny loads along the greensward. Meanwhile the hay is thrown about, and with each returning day comes the same pleasant labour, till the creaking of a wagon, lumbering up the hollow road from the old farm-house, half way down the hill, gives the signal, which tells that the haymaking season is about to close. A short time elapses, and the creak of the heavy-laden wagon is heard ringing over the stones. It comes up again for another load, then lumbers back to the old farm, where labourers are busily employed in placing the hay upon a strong foundation of wattled boughs. Some tread down the hay; others throw it up from out the wagon; till at length loud huzzas, that wake up all the neighbouring echoes, announce that all the hay-stacks are completed.

June is the shearing month; the season, too, for bees to swarm; and those who are much abroad in the fields may often hear the loud ringing of a warming-pan from some cottage garden, designed, as in the days of Virgil, to drive the bee colony to shelter.



THE MADONNA DELLA SEDIA.

(From the German.)

MANY hundred years ago, there lived in the beautiful land of Italy an aged recluse. After many severe trials and losses, he had retired to a deep solitary ravine, there to spend his last days in

peace and devotion. Yet such was his reputation for wisdom and goodness, that even there he was sought out by many persons; and the sorrowful or downcast mind always found counsel and comfort in his lowly hut. He was, therefore, justly loved and revered by all who knew him, and he, in return, though so nearly withdrawn from all human society, felt the natural craving of the human heart for sympathy and affection. Two lovely objects supplied this void; these he was accustomed to call his children: one had a voice, the other was dumb. The first was Maria, the little daughter of a neighbouring vine-dresser, who clung to the hermit with the fervour of affection, and often traversed the dark forest alone to visit him and carry bread, flowers, or the rich produce of her father's hills. The dumb child was a lofty and beautiful oak-tree, which grew above his hut, sheltering him with its wide-spreading boughs. With the one favourite, the old man enjoyed the prattle of innocence; he taught the child useful things, made her more familiar with nature, and carefully scattered seeds of goodness in her little heart. Upon the other he bestowed almost paternal care; in the dry summer season he watered its roots from a neighbouring brook; he fed and cherished the little birds which built their nests in its branches; and many a time, by his earnest entreaties, rescued his darling tree from the stroke of the axe.

"Be ever green, my strong and stately daughter," said the old man, as he clasped his tree. "I understand well the rustling and whispering of thy boughs, and will protect thee till thou overshadowest my grave."

After a very long, hard winter, during which the hills had been covered with snow to a great depth, a thaw came on so suddenly that the mountain-streams rushed down with terrific force, and caused great devastation in the valleys. One morning, Maria's father came in hastily, exclaiming to his wife, "Alas, our poor dear hermit! we shall never speak with him more. I have just seen from my vineyard how the flood is raging through the valley, so that the trees are only just visible above the waters."

Maria wept and piteously entreated her father to go to the old man's assistance; but he assured her that it was impossible, for the torrent had been rushing for hours above the roof of his habitation. Yet the hermit was saved!—not, however, by the hand of man: no, his dumb daughter had stood unmoved by the flood, and had supported him in her arms above its violence. He had fled to the roof of his hut, upon first perceiving the rising of the stream; and when that was on the point of being overflowed, he had climbed

the tree, which firmly withstood the fury of the waters, while many of its neighbours were uprooted and borne away. Three days passed before the waters subsided; for three days did the poor old man remain perched in the topmost branches of his tree, exposed to the cold and rain, with no other nourishment than a little dry bread, which he had providentially taken with him.

At length, on the fourth day, when almost powerless and exhausted, he came down, sank upon the damp muddy ground, and waited only for death. But a preserving angel came instead. It was his loving little friend Maria, who had known no rest nor happy moment since the fearful occurrence, and who now hastened through the clammy, miry forest path, with difficulty making her way through the ruins left by the flood. She came to know the fate of the good old man; for, in spite of her father's apprehensions, she clung to the hope of his being yet alive; and in this sweet hope she brought with her a basket of provisions. When she found her poor friend lying on the ground, she threw herself down by him, embraced him with her little arms, and recalled him to consciousness and joy.

The hermit thankfully partook of the nourishing food and reviving cordial which Maria offered him; then he kneeled down and devoutly thanked God for the preservation of his life, and implored Him to bless the instruments of his deliverance, and to exalt them above all their race. Strengthened and refreshed, he suffered Maria to lead him to her father's dwelling, where he abode until he could again withdraw to his solitude.

When Maria had grown up in innocence, beauty, and virtue, and had become a happy wife and mother, her ancient friend, the hermit, had long been numbered with the dead. Maria had closed his eyes, received his last blessing, and like an affectionate daughter had sincerely lamented him. His hut in the glen had fallen to ruins, and his beloved oak-tree had been felled; it was afterwards converted into wine casks, which were purchased by Maria's father.

Now, where is the fulfilment of the old man's prayer? do you ask, my children, since the wood of the beloved tree was doomed to moulder away in dark, damp cellars; and Maria's was a humble, undistinguished lot! Just listen patiently for a moment.

One of these wine-casks happened to have been rolled under the portico of the house, in order to be repaired and in readiness for the approaching season of vintage. Maria, to enjoy the beauty and freshness of the early morning, had seated herself under the portico with her two rosy children, fondling the babe at her bosom,

while the elder one played at her feet. As she gazed upon the valley beneath, once inhabited by her still tenderly remembered old friend, she recollected his blessing, and felt how it had been fulfilled to her in her children. Her serene blue eyes glistened in silent thankfulness.

Just at that time, a young man gently wandered by, apparently lost in meditation or dreaming fancy. It was Raphael Sanzio, the greatest painter of his own and every other age. An image of the Holy Mother and infant Jesus had long hovered before his soul; but never yet had he been able to embody his idea. Full of the engrossing thought, he had set out in his early solitary ramble to collect his powers.

As he passed, Maria greeted him courteously. He looked up at the sound of her gentle voice; and when he perceived the lovely mother and her children, he felt at once that here he had found his so long and vainly desired reality. From the mother's face beamed the holiest love; on her fair bosom rested the angelic infant, while the elder one looked joyfully up, holding in his hand a wand, fashioned into the form of a cross. The artist, in this moment of inspiration, wished to secure the group by sketching it on the spot; he had, however, only a chalk pencil in his hand. The first rays of the morning sun shining on the smooth end of the cask suggested to Raphael the idea that this would suit his purpose. He sketched the beautiful Maria and her children upon it, took it out of the cask, and carried it home, where he allowed himself no rest, until he had worked out and completed his immortal picture of "The Holy Family."

Raphael Sanzio d'Urbino died in 1520, more than 300 years ago; but his picture has not perished, but will be preserved as a sacred treasure from generation to generation.

Thus, dear children, you see how the good old man's blessing has been fulfilled; how his two beloved children have been united again, and in the sacred wood of the oak-tree the features of Maria and her children have been borne down in glorious beauty through centuries. Long will refined taste and devout hearts be enraptured and exalted at beholding that divine work of human art.

Perhaps it may be the good fortune of some amongst you to visit the land of this invaluable painting, where it is yet to be seen and is still renowned under the name of the *Madonna della Sedia*.*

* Our Lady of the Chair.

SPRING FLOWERS.

THE fields are now enamelled with flowers, the trees are sending forth their young and tender leaves, and the bright green of the larch is enlivening the woods. Spring is come,—bright, pleasant, hopeful Spring,—and each day brings forth some new beauty or unfolds the buds of some old favourite; the primroses cover the banks, and the cowslips deck the fields; and

“ The green turf, with daisies 'broidered o'er.”

In the damp, mossy recesses of the woods the stately orchis rears her purple head, and the “ nodding violet” nestles in the grass. Flowers are the friends of those who dwell in the country. Shut out from society, these furnish constant delight to all who watch them carefully: their lovely colours, their graceful forms, their endless succession, give variety and interest to every walk. As the months come round we look for the buds of promise, and see them day by day expanding into beauty. With poets they have always been favourites; and by associating poetry with these lovely nurslings of the woods and fields, a new source of pleasure arises in a country ramble.

“ Flowers to the fair! To you these flowers I bring,
And strive to greet you with an earlier spring.
Flowers sweet, and gay, and delicate, like you,—
Emblems of innocence and beauty too.
With flowers the graces bind their yellow hair,
And flowery wreaths consenting lovers wear.
Flowers, the sole luxury which nature knew,
In Eden's pure and guiltless garden grew.
To loftier forms are rougher tasks assigned;
The sheltering oak resists the stormy wind,
The tougher yew repels invading foes,
And the tall pine for future navies grows;
But this soft family, to cares unknown,
Were born for pleasure and delight alone:
Gay without toil, and lovely without art,
They spring to cheer the sense and glad the heart.
Nor blush, my fair, to own you copy these,—
Your best, your sweetest empire, is, to please.”—MRS. BARBAULD.

THE SNOWDROP.

“ We'll follow where the smiling goddess leads,
Through tangled forests or enamelled meads;
O'er pathless hills her airy form we'll chase,
In silent glades her fairy footsteps trace;
Small pains there needs her footsteps to pursue,
She cannot fly from friendship and from you.

Now the glad earth her frozen zone unbinds,
 And o'er her bosom breathe the western winds.
 Already now the snowdrop dares appear,
 The first pale blossom of the unripened year;
 As Flora's breath, by some transforming power,
 Had changed an icicle into a flower,
 Its name and hue the scentless plant retains,
 And winter lingers in its icy veins;
 To these succeed the violet's dusky blue,
 And each inferior flower of fainter hue."—**Mrs. BABBAULD.**

" Fair rising from her snowy couch,
 Wan herald of the floral year;
 The snowdrop marks the spring's approach
 Ere yet the primroses appear,
 Or peeps the crocus from its spotted veil,
 Or odorous violets scent the cold capricious gale."—**SMITH.**

THE DAISY.

The Daisy—"wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower"—soon peeps forth when the wintry snows are gone, rivalling their whiteness; scattered every where, it greets us like a dear, familiar friend; sharing oftentimes the fate of most familiar things, it is prized on its first appearance, but soon forgotten when newer and gaudier flowers display their charms.

" There is a flower, a little flower,
 With silver crest and golden eye,
 That welcomes every changing hour
 And weathers every sky.
 * * * * *

It smiles upon the lap of May,
 To sultry Autumn spreads its charms,
 Lights pale October on his way,
 And twines December's arms.
 * * * * *

'Tis Flora's page. In every place,
 In every season, fresh and fair,
 It opens with perennial grace,
 And blossoms every where.
 On waste and woodland, rock and plain,
 Its humble buds unheeded rise:
 The rose has but a summer's reign,
 The daisy never dies."—**SMITH.**

" When Winter decks his few grey hairs
 Thee in the scanty wreath he wears;
 Spring parts the clouds with softest airs,
 That she may sun thee;
 Whole summer fields are thine by right,
 And Autumn, melancholy wight!
 Doth in thy crimson head delight,
 When rains are on thee,

In shoals and bands, a morrice train,
Thou greetest the traveller in the lane;
If welcome once thou count'st it gain,—

Thou are not daunted,
Nor car'st if thou be set at nought:
And oft alone, in nooks remote,
We meet thee like a pleasant thought
When such are wanted."—WORDSWORTH.

THE DAFFODIL.

The Daffodil is an April flower, often showing its bright yellow blossoms as early as March; but this year the season has been so cold that even in May they are still in flower. Here, in the south of England, they grow wild, and the people call them "Lent-lilies."

"I would some flowers of the spring,
Oh, Proserpina!
For the flowers now that frightened thou lett'st fall
From Dis's wagon: daffodils
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength."—*Winter's Tale*

And Herrick, in his quaint old verse, thus chants the praise of daffodils.—

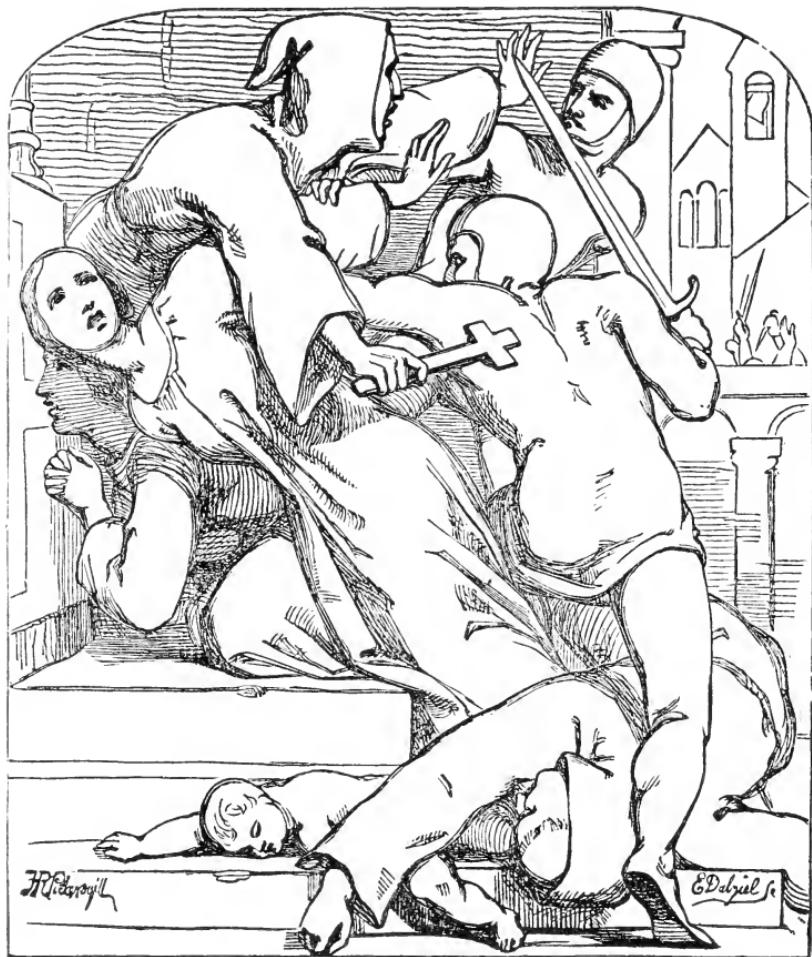


ENIGMA II.

WHAT is that pale blue flow'ret there,
That trembles in the slightest air?
Nor roots its slender stem beneath
This sheltering tree, but loves the heath,
And yon sunny slope of hill,
Where basks my first unseen and still;
Till startled by my second's tongue,
Heard the nibbling sheep among,
Or wafted by the fitful breeze
From those spire-embow'ring trees,
It perks its mobile downy ears,
Scared by unnecessary fears;
Then, by its own foot-beaten track,
Hies to the ferny covert back.

ENIGMA III.

FOREMOST of every vernal flower
My second graces after shower,
My lowly head is reared;
Ere yet stern Winter yields his sway,
Or under Sol's dissolving ray,
My first has disappeared



HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

By Mrs. James Whittle, Author of "Letters from Italy to a Younger Sister."

HISTORY abounds with events of such romantic interest, that poets and novelists have drawn many of their best plots from its pages. Shakspeare has no less than ten plays taken from English, three from Roman, one from Grecian, and one from Scottish history; succeeding dramatists have culled from the same field. Sir

Walter Scott introduced the historical romance into our literature, and in many of his novels has skilfully blended history with romance, and given us faithful and valuable pictures of manners and customs now passed away. Fiction, however, can add little to the charm of simple truth; and we may find tales of as deep and powerful interest scattered through history, as ever sprang from the imagination of the novelist.

Amongst the most remarkable events recorded in history are those great struggles which have taken place from time to time between tyranny and freedom: these are important, not only in connexion with the individuals who originated them, but universally; since, wherever man has boldly and successfully resisted the spirit of oppression, a step has been gained in the march of nations towards civilisation. To describe some of these struggles, and shew their beneficial results, will be one aim of your *Playmate's "Historical Sketches."*

NO. I.

THE SICILIAN VESPERS.

The Normans, or Northmen, were amongst the most adventurous of the barbarian tribes, who in the Middle Ages ravaged the South of Europe. They dwelt on the shores of the Baltic, and having learned the art of building ships, sailed away in search of distant countries to conquer. They landed and established a colony in the north of France, and, emboldened by success, advanced further, passed the Straits of Gibraltar, and, charmed with the beauty and fertility of Italy, attacked the inhabitants, and possessed themselves by degrees of Apulia and Calabria; they drove the Saracens from Sicily, subdued the three republics of Beneventum, Salerno, and Capua, and finally seizing upon Naples, erected the whole of the south of Italy into a kingdom, under the title of the Two Sicilies, A. D. 1138. The crown continued in the Norman line until 1183, when, in default of male descendants, it was transferred with the hand of Constance, its sole heiress, to Henry VI., emperor of Germany. Frederic II., his successor, bequeathed this kingdom to his son Conrad, on whose death it passed into the hands of Conradin, a mere child. During the minority of Conradin his uncle Manfred usurped the government, and by his courteous manners and just administration of affairs gained the attachment of all his subjects. As Conradin grew up, he became impatient of his uncle's

usurpation, but, wisely desirous of averting the evils of war, he entered into a compromise ; agreeing that Manfred should retain the sceptre during his life, on condition of its reverting to himself at his death.

A feud had long existed between the Popes and the Emperors of Germany ; and Urban IV. was so alarmed by the growing popularity and valour of Manfred, that he unwisely invited Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX. of France, to come to his assistance, promising to invest him with the crown of the Two Sicilies. Charles, induced by the entreaties of his wife Beatrice, an ambitious woman, engaged in the undertaking, and entered Italy at the head of a powerful army. Manfred at once recognised the danger, yet did not shrink from his post. The armies met near Beneventum, and after a fierce and bloody struggle Manfred was slain and his troops routed. Charles then marched straight to Naples, and took possession of his new dominions.

When Conradin heard this fatal news, imploring aid from his German friends, he hastened to revenge his uncle's death and regain the kingdom, of which he was now the rightful sovereign. His courage and valour were alike unavailing, when matched against the experience and subtlety of his rival. Conradin was defeated, taken prisoner, and executed by order of the relentless Charles. When led forth to death, the stripling excited universal sympathy by his tender age, his dignified bearing, but most of all by his innocence. Having mounted the scaffold, he knelt in prayer ; the remembrance of his mother alone daunted his spirit for a moment. "My mother ! my mother !" he exclaimed, "this news will break your heart." Then rising, he threw his glove amongst the crowd, intreating that some one would carry it to Constance, the daughter of Manfred, and wife of Peter king of Arragon, whom he formally nominated his successor to the Sicilian kingdom.

Charles was now firmly seated on the throne ; his disposition, at all times stern and severe, became, after the death of his wife Beatrice, cruel and blood-thirsty. He oppressed his people with unjust taxes, until unable any longer to endure his tyranny the Sicilians rose and fearfully revenged their wrongs. I shall give an abridged account of this insurrection in the words of the Italian historian Giannone.

Giovanni di Procida, a nobleman of Salerno and lord of Procida, was a firm adherent of the house of Swabia, and greatly esteemed both by Frederick II. and Manfred. After the fatal termination of the battle of Beneventum, he was present at the execution of Con-

rardin, picked up the glove thrown by the youthful victim from the scaffold, and hastening to Spain gained admittance to Queen Constance. To her he delivered this dying bequest, together with the message of her nephew. Constance was deeply affected by the news; both she and her husband received Procida with the greatest kindness, and created him baron of Valencia. Giovanni, touched by this generosity, devoted all his energies to their service; resolving never to relax in his exertions, until Constance should be placed upon the throne of the Two Sicilies. He maintained a body of men as spies on the actions of Charles, and began cautiously to unfold his schemes, by letter, to a few chosen friends. He made but little progress at first, for Charles had carefully distributed his followers through the towns of Apulia and Calabria, and by severely punishing all the disaffected, and heaping rewards on those who joined his cause, the attachment to the memory of Manfred had been effectually crushed. This being the case, Procida turned his attention to Sicily, where he found a state of things more ripe for his purpose. The ministers to whom Charles had entrusted the government of the island were all Frenchmen, selected from his army, whose sole aim was to enrich themselves, caring not at what cost to the people; the Sicilians in consequence cordially hated their oppressors, and Giovanni entering the island in disguise, quickly induced some of the most powerful amongst the nobles to join in a conspiracy for



attacking and expelling the French, and proclaiming Peter and Constance sovereigns of Sicily. They agreed however to remain quiet until further aid could be procured, conscious that their own resources would not suffice against so formidable an antagonist. It occurred at once to Giovanni, that they might avail themselves of the dispute then existing between Pope Nicholas and Charles ; he remembered also that Paleologus, emperor of the East, was in hourly dread of an invasion from Charles, and that he might easily be won to take part in any enterprise which might divert his attention from an attack on Constantinople. In the disguise of a monk he repaired at once to Rome, where he found the pope most favourably inclined to the plans of the conspirators. In the same dress he continued his journey to Constantinople, and readily persuaded Paleologus to co-operate with them ; convincing him that the surest method of averting an attack from his own dominions was to advance money to Peter of Arragon, in furtherance of the Sicilian enterprise. Thus war being carried into the territories of Charles, he must of necessity abandon all idea of foreign conquest. The emperor willingly agreed to advance a sum of money, on condition that Peter would begin the expedition immediately, and with spirit. He despatched his private secretary with Giovanni to the court of Peter, entrusting the money to him, and at the same time commanding him to assure the Pope of his willingness to aid the cause. The two ambassadors landed at Malta, where



they were met by some of the conspirators from Sicily ; and after relating to them the prosperous state of their affairs, and re-animating their hopes, they proceeded to Rome. Nicholas listened to their project favorably ; he was alarmed at the increasing power of Charles, who had begun to treat the Papal see with great neglect, and readily agreed to assist the conspirators with money. He promised to give the Papal sanction to the enterprise, and to grant the investiture of the kingdom of the Two Sicilies to Peter. From Rome, Procida hastened to Arragon ; he found Peter timid, and wavering as to his part of the affair ; but when he was made clearly to understand that the emperor Paleologus, and the Pope, had shewn the sincerity of their offers of assistance by advancing large sums of money—that the Sicilians burned with impatience to throw off the French yoke—and that he need not appear in the undertaking until the conspiracy had actually burst forth, Peter's fears began to vanish. Procida found an able coadjutor in Constance, who entreated her husband not to allow so excellent an opportunity of avenging the death of her father and nephew to pass by ; urging upon him at the same time the advantage of annexing the crown of the Two Sicilies to that of Arragon. Peter at last yielded to all these arguments ; he speedily convoked an assembly of his nobles, who agreed forthwith to equip a fleet, under the pretence of making war upon the Saracens in Africa. The better to elude suspicion, it was ordered to steer for that country, hover about the coast, and be in readiness to set sail for Sicily if the conspiracy succeeded, or, in the event of a failure, to prosecute the avowed expedition against the Infidels.

During the arrangement of these preliminaries Pope Nicholas died, and a Frenchman, a partisan of Charles, was elected by his intrigues to fill the Papal chair, under the name of Martin IV. Giovanni, fearing that the ardour of Paleologus might cool, determined to return at once to Constantinople. Accompanied by the Emperor's secretary, he again assumed his monk's disguise, and crossed over to Sicily ; they here communicated with some of the leaders in the conspiracy, and confiding to them all that had been already done, implored them to keep a good heart and fear nothing from the death of Nicholas. Giovanni succeeded in impressing the secretary with the ardour of the Sicilians, and their firm resolve to die rather than longer to endure the tyranny of the French : thus he was enabled, from personal observation, to re-assure the Emperor, to whose court they immediately repaired. It is a singular

fact that, by the prudence of Procida, this conspiracy, carried on between so many and widely scattered nations for two years, was kept a secret from the crafty Charles.

Peter, though dismayed by the death of his ally Nicholas, did not abandon the enterprise. He sent ambassadors to the new pontiff, ostensibly to congratulate him on his accession to the throne, but really to sound his opinions on the claim of Constance to the kingdom of the Two Sicilies ; endeavouring to persuade the Pope that he desired to decide the question, not in the field of battle, but peacefully in the courts of the Holy College. Martin courteously thanked the ambassador for his visit, but added,—“ Tell your king to expect no favour from the apostolic seat until he has paid all the arrears of tax due from his predecessors and himself, as true vassals and feudatories of the Church.” Meanwhile Giovanni di Procida returned from Constantinople, and, under various disguises, traversed Sicily, exciting the conspirators to rebellion. By means of secret messengers he kept up a communication with Peter, and, as soon as he found that the fleet was ready to set sail, he fixed a day and hour for the insurrection to burst forth.

On the second day of Easter, in the month of March, 1282, when the vesper-bell tolled the hour of evening prayer throughout every part of Sicily, the people rushed out armed, and massacred all the French inhabitants of the island, without distinction of age or sex ; so blind was their rage and fury, that many Sicilian women and children, whose tender age might well have been their safeguard, were sacrificed in the tumult. The names of Peter and Constance resounded through the island ; in less than two hours eight thousand persons perished—none were spared : a few tried to escape and conceal themselves until the excitement should subside, but in vain ; the Sicilians pursued their victims until not a Frenchman remained in the island.

Thus ended “The Sicilian Vespers,” which gave a death-blow to the power of Charles. He vainly endeavoured to regain the crown : disheartened by his losses, broken down by bodily disease, this usurper and tyrant ended his days in misery, surviving the Sicilian insurrection little more than two years.

THE HORSE-SHOE-NAIL.

From the German of M.M. Grimm.

A FARMER once went to market, and, meeting with good luck, he sold all his corn and lined his purse with silver and gold. Then he thought it time to return, in order to reach home before night-fall: so he packed his money-bags upon his horse's back and set out on his journey. At noon he stopped in a village to rest; and when he was starting again the hostler, as he led out the horse, said, "Please you, sir, the left shoe behind has lost a nail." "Let it go," answered the farmer; "the shoe will hold fast enough for the twenty miles that I have still to travel. I'm in haste." So saying, he journeyed on.

In the afternoon, the farmer stopped again to bait his horse; and as he was sitting in the inn the stable-boy came, and said, "Sir, your horse has lost a nail in his left shoe behind: shall I take him to the smithy?" "Let him alone," answered the farmer; I've only six miles further to go, and the horse will travel well enough that distance. I've no time to lose."

Away rode the farmer; but he had not gone far before the horse began to limp: it had not limped far, ere it began to stumble; and it had not stumbled long, before it fell down and broke a leg. Then the farmer was obliged to leave the horse lying in the road, to unstrap his bags, throw them over his shoulder, and make his way home on foot as well as he could, where he did not arrive till late at night. "All my ill-luck," said the farmer to himself, "comes from neglect of a horse-shoe-nail!"

THE MONKEY.

A MONKEY got into the room of a rich miser, who never gave a farthing to the poor; and seeing a chest full of gold, he began flinging the sovereigns out at the window among the people, till there was not one left. The monkey had just finished his job when the old miser came home; and seeing what had been done, his rage was very great, and he would have killed the monkey on the spot, if he had not jumped away faster than he came in. A neighbour, hearing what had been done, said to the miser, "It was very foolish of the monkey, certainly, to throw the sovereigns out at the window; but it was still more foolish for you to keep them locked up in a chest, without making any good use of them."



THE FISHERMAN AND THE FLOUNDER.

From the German of the Brothers Grimm.

THERE was once a fisherman and his wife, who lived together in a wretched hovel, close to the sea, and every day he went to throw out his line; and this lasted for a long time.

One day as he sat on the shore watching his angle, and gazing right into the shining waters, something very weighty pulled the

line down deep beneath the surface, and when he succeeded in drawing it up again, behold, he had caught a large flounder!

Then the flounder said to him: "Prithee let me go—for I'm not a real flounder, but an enchanted prince; so put me back into the water, and let me swim away."

"You needn't say so many words about it," replied the man, "for any way I should let go a flounder that is able to speak."



So he set him back into the waters, and the flounder dived down to the bottom, leaving a long track of blood behind him.

The man then returned to his hovel, and told his wife how he had caught a flounder, who had told him he was an enchanted prince, upon which he had let him go his ways.

"And did you ask for nothing?" said the wife.

"No," said the husband: "what should I have asked for?"

"Ah!" replied she, "'tis so wretched to live in this dirty, narrow hovel! Now do go and ask for a nice cottage."

The fisherman did not much relish this, still he went to the sea-shore, and when he reached it the sea looked both green and yellow, and he stood beside the waters, and said:

" Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Quickly hither come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell."

The flounder then came swimming along, and said:

“Well, what does she want?”

“Alas!” replied the man, “my wife says, that when I caught you I ought to have asked for a boon, for she doesn’t like to live any longer in our hovel, but wants a proper cottage.”

“Go home,” replied the flounder; “you will find her in it.”

So the man went home, and he found his wife standing at the door of a cottage, and she said to him: “Come in, this is really something better than what we had before.”

And there was a room, a chamber, and a kitchen, and behind there was a little garden with all sorts of vegetables, and a farmyard with ducks and hens.

“Oh, how contented we shall now be!” cried the fisherman.

“Yes—we’ll endeavour to be so,” replied the woman.

A week, and then a fortnight had scarcely passed over their heads, when the wife said: “Husband, this cottage is too small for me; the farmyard and garden are too small—I want to live in a fine large house. Go to the flounder, and ask him to get us a mansion.”

“Wife, wife!” said the man, “the flounder gave us the cottage, and I should not like to go back to him to ask for something more, for he might take it ill.”

“Don’t tell me!” said the wife; “he can do it well enough, and very willingly too, if you do but go and ask him.”

So the man went away with a heavy heart, and when he reached the sea-side the waters looked violet, grey, and dark blue; but they were quite smooth, so he walked up to them and said:

“Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell.”

“Why, what does she want?” said the flounder.

“Alack!” replied the fisherman in deep sorrow, “my wife wants to live in a stone house!”

“Go home, and you will find her standing before the door,” said the flounder.

So the husband went back, and sure enough his wife was standing in front of a large palace.

“See, goodman,” said she; “this is something like!”

And hereupon they entered it together, and they found a number of servants, and the walls were all glittering; there was a golden chair and table in the room, and behind the castle was a garden, and

a wood about half a mile long, in which were stags, and deer, and hares ; while in the yard stood stables full of cows and horses.

“Now,” said the husband, “we’ll live in this fine castle, and be contented.”

“We will consider about that,” said the wife; “in the meantime we’ll consult our pillow.”

So they retired to rest.

On the following morning the wife woke up, and seeing it was broad day, she pushed her elbow into her husband’s side, saying : “Get up, husband, we ought to reign over the whole land.”

“But, wife,” said the husband, “what’s the use of reigning ? I’m sure I don’t wish to be king.”

“Well, then, I’ll be king,” answered she.

“O wife !” replied the husband, “how can you become king ? Surely the flounder won’t grant us that !”

“Husband,” rejoined she, “go straight to him, for I’m set upon being king.”

So the husband went away quite sad to think that his wife insisted on being king, and when he reached the sea the waves were of a blackish grey, and rolling up and down. So he stood on the shore saying :

‘ Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me ;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell.’

“Why, what does she want now ?” said the flounder.

“Alas !” sighed the man, “my wife wants to be king !”

“Go home, she is become so already,” said the flounder.

So the husband went home, and when he reached the palace he perceived a quantity of soldiers with trumpets and drums, and his wife was sitting on a lofty throne of gold, studded with diamonds, and wore a golden crown, and on each side of her stood a row of waiting-women, each one a head shorter than the other.

“Well,” said the husband, “so now you are king ?”

“Yes,” replied she ; “I’m king.”

And after he had gazed at her for awhile he said, “What a fine thing it is, wife, that you should be king ! Now we’ll wish for nothing more.”

“Nay, goodman,” said she, “this has lasted long enough—I can’t stand it any longer : I’m king, and now I choose to be emperor.”

“Alas, wife!” said the husband, “what is the use of being emperor?”

“Husband,” said she, “go to the flounder; I will be emperor.”

“But, wife,” said the husband, “the flounder can’t make you emperor, and I shouldn’t like to ask him.”

“I’m king,” said the wife, “and you are my husband; so go at once as I tell you.”

So the husband left her, and as he went his ways he said to himself: “This is going rather too far—it is too barefaced to ask to be emperor, and the flounder will finish by being angry.”

With these words he reached the shore, and the waters were black and thick, and the wind was whistling with a shrill voice. He then approached the sea, and said,—

“Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell.”

“Well! what does she want?” said the flounder.

“Alas!” cried he, “my wife wants to be emperor!”

“Go home,” said the flounder; “she is emperor already.”

The husband then went back, and on reaching home he found his wife sitting on a very lofty throne, that was made of a single piece of gold, and wearing on her head a large crown, that was at least two yards high, and on each side of her stood a row of satellites, one shorter than the other, from the tallest giant down to the tiniest dwarf, as short as my little finger. Before her stood princes and counts, and when her husband approached her he said: “So wife, now you are emperor?”

“Yes,” replied she; “I’m emperor.”

“O wife!” cried he as he looked at her, “what a fine thing it is that you should be emperor!”

“Husband,” answered she, “don’t stand idling there; now I am emperor, I want to be pope.”

“Nay, wife,” said the husband, “how can you think of wanting to be pope? You know there is only one pope in all Christendom.”

“Husband,” quoth she, “pope I must be; and this very day, too.”

“Nay, wife,” said he, “the flounder can’t make a pope of you; so it will never do to ask him.”

“Nonsense, husband!” replied she; “if he can make an emperor, he can make a pope: so go and see after it.”

So the husband went, but his spirits flagged and his knees trembled, while the wind blew violently, and the waves were lashing the shore as when there is a shipwreck, and the billows were raging, and the sky was black, and a tempest seemed about to burst forth. And the fisherman was quite unnerved as he approached the water, and said,—

“Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell.”

“Why, what does she want now?” said the flounder.

“Alas!” said the man, “my wife has taken it into her head to want to be a pope!”

“Go back,” said the flounder; “a pope you will find her.”

Then he went back, and on reaching home he found his wife sitting on a throne two miles high, with a triple crown upon her head, and around her stood a staff of the highest dignitaries of the church, and on each side of her was placed a row of wax-lights, the biggest of which was as thick as the largest tower, gradually dwindling down to a farthing rushlight.

“Wife,” said the husband as he looked at her, “so now you are a pope?”

“Yes,” replied she; “I am pope.”

“O wife,” said the husband, “what a fine thing it is that you should be pope! And now, wife, you’ll be contented; for, being pope, you can’t get any higher.”

“I shall think about that,” said the wife.

And then they retired to rest; but she could not feel satisfied, and her ambition would not let her sleep, for she kept thinking what she should wish for next.

At length the sun rose. “Ha!” thought she, as she watched it from the window, “why should not I make the sun rise myself?”

Then she waxed wroth, and giving her husband a push, she said: “Husband, go to the flounder, for I want to become Lord of the spheres.”

The husband, though still half asleep, was so frightened at this that he fell out of bed.

“Wife, wife!” remonstrated he, “think better of it, and be satisfied with remaining pope.”

“No,” cried the wife, “I cannot bear any longer to see the

sui and moon rise, and to think that I can't make them rise when I please. I want to be Lord of the spheres."

"Alas, wife!" said the fisherman, "the flounder cannot grant such a wish. He can make an emperor or a pope, but further his power can't go."

"Husband!" cried she in a rage, "I want to be equal to the Lord of the spheres: so go at once to the flounder."

The fisherman trembled in every limb, and there arose such a storm that the trees and the very rocks waved about, while the sky was one sheet of black, and it thundered and lightened; and the billows of the sea rose up as high as mountains, with each a crest of foam on their summit. He then said:

"Flounder, flounder, in the sea,
Prithee quickly come to me;
For my wife, dame Isabel,
Wants strange things I scarce dare tell."

"What does she want next?" inquired the flounder.

"Alas!" faltered he, "she wants to be equal to the Lord of the spheres!"

"Go back to your hovel again!" cried the flounder.

And in their hovel sure enough are they still to this very day.

A RICH HEAD AND A POOR HEAD.

DURING the reign of the late King of Poland, a conspiracy was formed against him; by no means an uncommon occurrence in that unhappy country. One of the rebels, a Polish prince, forgot his duty to his sovereign so far as to set a price of 20,000 florins on the royal head. He had even the insolence to write to the King, informing him of the circumstance, with the idea of either vexing or frightening him. The King, however, sent him the following cool reply:—"I have received your letter, and beg to inform you that the perusal of it gave me exceeding pleasure, so glad was I to find that you valued my head at such a high price; I can assure you, that I should be very sorry to pay one farthing for yours."



ENIGMA IV.

THE summer sun has ceased to shed
 My first on garden hedgerows trim ;
 Its changing tints from earth have fled,
 The stars with dewy clouds are dim.
 Regardless of the evening's damp,
 Two lovers down the pathway stray ;
 I shew my ineffectual lamp
 To light them on their darkling way.



As in the lady's willing ear
 His ardent vows of true love speak,
 In lovelier tints doth reappear
 My first upon her blushing cheek.
 Confiding girl ! his vows beware,
 And let yon rose a warning yield :
 Amid its leaves that bloom so fair
 My loathsome second's oft concealed.

Forsworn ? Once more with deeper dye
 My first, of shame and ire the token,
 Flushes her cheek, lights up her eye,
 Then leaves her pale, disgraced,
 heart-broken.
 Trampled in blood where war clouds
 roll,
 On battle-field the traitor lies ;
 While fiends exulting plunge his soul
 To where my second never dies !



FAIR ROSAMOND.

WHEN as King Henry ruled this land,
The second of that name,
Besides the queen, he dearly loved
A fair and comely dame.

Most peerless was her beauty found,
Her favour, and her face;
A sweeter creature in this world
Could never prince embrace.

Her crispèd locks like threads of gold
Appear'd to each man's sight;
Her sparkling eyes, like Orient pearls,
Did cast a heavenly light.

The blood within her crystal cheeks
Did such a colour drive,
As though the lily and the rose
For mastership did strive.

Yea, Rosamond, fair Rosamond,
Her name was call'd so,
To whom our queen, dame Eleanor
Was known a deadly foe

The king, therefore, for her defence
Against the furious queen,
At Woodstock builded such a bower,
The like was never seen.

Most curiously that bower was built
Of stone and timber strong ;
An hundred and fifty doors
Did to this bower belong :

And they so cunningly contrived,
With turnings round about,
That none but with a clue of thread
Could enter in or out.

And for his love and lady's sake,
That was so fair and bright,
The keeping of this bow'r he gave
Unto a valiant knight.

But Fortune, that doth often frown
Where she before did smile ;
The king's delight and lady's joy
Full soon she did beguile.

For why?—the king's ungracious son,
Whom he did high advance,
Against his father rais'd wars
Within the realm of France.

But yet, before our comely king
The English land forsook,
Of Rosamond, his lady fair,
His farewell thus he took :

“ My Rosamond, my only Rose,
That pleaseth best mine eye :
The fairest flower in all the world
To feed my fantasy :

The flower of mine affected heart,
Whose sweetness doth excel :
My royal Rose, a thousand times
I bid thee now farewell !

For I must leave my fairest flower,
My sweetest Rose, a space,
And cross the seas to famous France,
Proud rebels to abase.

But yet, my Rose, be sure thou shalt
My coming shortly see,
And in my heart, when hence I am,
I'll bear my Rose with me.”

When Rosamond, that lady bright,
Did hear the king say so,
The sorrow of her grieved heart
Her outward looks did show ;

And from her clear and crystal eyes
The tears gush'd out apace,
Which like the silver-pearlèd dew
Ran down her comely face.

Her lips, erst like the coral red,
Did wax both wan and pale,
And for the sorrow she conceived
Her vital spirits fail ;

And falling down all in a swoon
Before King Henry's face,
Full oft he in his princely arms
Her body did embrace

And twenty times, with watery eyes,
He kiss'd her tender cheek,
Until he had revived again
Her senses mild and meek.

“ Why grieves my Rose, my sweetest
The king did often say [Rose?]
“ Because,” quoth she, “ to bloody warr
My lord must part away.

But since your grace to foreign coasts,
Among your foes unkind,
Must go to hazard life and limb,
Why should I stay behind ?

Nay, rather let me, like a page,
Your sword and target bear ;
That on my breast the blows may light,
Which would offend you there.

Or let me, in your royal tent,
Prepare your bed at night,
And with sweet baths refresh your grace
At your return from fight.

So I your presence may enjoy
No toil I will refuse :
But wanting you, my life is death ;
Nay, death I'd rather choose.”

" Content thyself, my dearest love ;
 Thy rest at home shall be
 In England's sweet and pleasant isle ;
 For travel fits not thee.

Fair ladies brook not bloody wars :
 Soft peace their sex delights ;
 ' Not rugged camps, but courtly bowers ;
 Gay feasts, not cruel fights.'

My Rose shall safely here abide,
 With music pass the day ;
 Whilst I, among the piercing pikes,
 My foes seek far away.

My Rose shall shine in pearl and gold,
 Whilst I'm in armour dight ;
 Gay galliards here my love shall dance
 Whilst I my foes go fight.

And you, Sir Thomas, whom I trust
 To be my love's defence,
 Be careful of my gallant Rose
 When I am parted hence."

And therewithal he fetch'd a sigh,
 As though his heart would break ;
 And Rosamond, for very grief,
 Not one plain word could speak.

And at their parting well they might
 In heart be grieved sore :
 After that day fair Rosamond
 The king did see no more.

For when his grace had pass'd the seas,
 And into France was gone,
 With envious heart Queen Eleanor
 To Woodstock came anon.

And forth she calls this trusty knight,
 In an unhappy hour ;
 Who with his clue of twinèd thread,
 Came from this famous bower.

And when that they had wounded him,
 The queen this thread did get,
 And went where Lady Rosamond
 Was like an angel set.

But when the queen with steadfast eye
 Beheld her beauteous face,
 She was amazed in her mind
 At her exceeding grace.

" Cast off from thee these robes," she
 " That rich and costly be ; " I said,
 And drink thou up this deadly draught,
 Which I have brought to thee."

Then presently upon her knees
 Sweet Rosamond did fall ;
 And pardon of the queen she craved
 For her offences all.

" Take pity on my youthful years,"
 Fair Rosamond did cry ;
 " And let me not with poison strong
 Enforcèd be to die.

I will renounce my sinful life,
 And in some cloister bide ;
 Or else be banish'd, if you please,
 To range the world so wide.

And for the fault which I have done,
 Though I was forced thereto,
 Preserve my life, and punish me
 As you think meet to do."

And with these words, her lily hands
 She wrung full often there ;
 And down along her lovely face
 Did trickle many a tear.

But nothing could this furious queen
 Therewith appeasèd be ;
 The cup of deadly poison strong,
 As she knelt on her knee,

She gave this comely dame to drink ;
 Who took it in her hand,
 And from her bended knee arose,
 And on her feet did stand :

And casting up her eyes to heaven,
 She did for mercy call ;
 And drinking up the poison strong,
 Her life she lost withal.

And when that death through every limb
 Had shewn its greatest spite,
 Her chiefest foes did plain confess
 She was a glorious wight.

Her body then they did entomb,
 When life was fled away,
 At Godstow, near to Oxford town,
 As may be seen this day.



THE OAK.

From "The Woodland Companion," by Dr. Aikin.

THE oak stands at the head of British timber-trees, as well on account of its utility as of the grandeur and majesty of its figure. It arrives at a bulk equal, if not superior, to that of any other tree of the forest; and by the vast arms which it throws out on evry side, it forms a mass which fills the eye of the spectator, and impresses him with gigantic ideas. Its rugged bark and jagged deep-green leaves add to its character of rustic and masculine strength.

The oak most delights in a rich, strong soil, in which it strikes its roots to a vast depth. It loves hilly rather than boggy ground, and thrives best in large plantations. It is injured by cropping; whence may be estimated the mischief annually done to this noble tree by the custom of cutting large branches for the celebration of the 29th of May. It forms the largest head, and spreads in the most picturesque figure, when growing singly, as in parks and ornamental grounds; but it rises with a tall and straight trunk only in woods and close plantations.

The uses of the oak-tree are very various, and comprehend almost every part of it. The acorns (which, in common with the nuts of other timber-trees, bear the name of *mast*) are said to have been one of the earliest foods of mankind; and in some of the warm climates they are still in use for that purpose. With us they are valued as the food of swine, of which large droves are sent

to fatten in the oak woods in this kingdom during some weeks in autumn, when the ripe acorns begin to fall. Squirrels and other small quadrupeds also partake of the repast, and lay up acorns for their winter store.

Every part of the oak abounds in an astringent juice, which is applied to various purposes. The bark is particularly valuable on this account, which renders it the chief material for tanning leather. Oaks growing in hedge-rows, which seldom arrive to the size of timber-trees, owe great part of their value to their bark. Before it is used it is ground to powder, and the infusion of it in water is by the tanners termed ooze. The small twigs, and even the leaves of the oak, may be applied to a similar purpose. Galls, which are an excrescence formed in the warm countries upon the leaves of a species of oak by means of an insect, are some of the strongest astringents known, and are much used in dyeing, on account of their property of striking a deep black, with the addition of vitriol of iron. The oak-apples (as they are improperly called), formed in the same manner upon our trees, possess a similar property, in a smaller degree. Oak saw-dust is the principal material used in dying fustians. It gives all the varieties of drab colours and shades of brown, accordingly as it is managed and compounded.

But it is by the use of its wood that the oak has acquired its chief fame, and especially for the important purpose of ship-building. This has made it so peculiarly the favourite of England, to whose naval glory it is supposed materially to have contributed. Thus Pope, in "Windsor Forest," speaking of vegetable treasure, says,—

" Let India boast her plants, nor envy we
The weeping amber and the balmy tree,
While by our oaks the precious loads are borne,
And realms commanded which those trees adorn."

Oak-timber is fitted for this purpose by its strength and durability, and also by the property of not readily splintering,—a circumstance of much consequence since the invention of cannon. Ships of war, therefore, if not entirely built of oak (which from the present scarcity of that timber is seldom done) have always their sides planked with it. The crooked pieces of this wood, procured from the bend of the branches, are also used for the *knees*, by which the planks are held out and supported. Oak-timber is likewise preferred for many other services of strength. In house-building it is used for door and window-frames, and for wall plates. When more plentiful, floors and staircases were also made of it.

In machinery, no other wood is equal to it where a great stress is to be borne; as in mill-work, steam-engines, and the like. It is used for the bodies of carts and waggons, also for gates, posts, and ladders. In the country it is a common material for furniture, such as tables, bedsteads, and chests of drawers; its durability being thought a compensation for the difficulty of working it. The coopers employ it for their largest vessels, and for well-buckets and water-pails.

The oak may be termed not less the poet's tree than the artisan's. Some of the first poets, ancient and modern, have chosen it as an object either of direct description or of simile; and that, not only in its flourishing state, but in its decay. Spenser has given a fable of the Oak and the Briar, in his "Shepherd's Calendar," which, as being of true English growth, I shall copy:—

"There grew an aged tree on the green,
A goodly oak sometime had it been,
With arms full strong and largely display'd,
But of their leaves they were disarray'd:
The body big and mightily pight,
Thoroughly rooted, and of wondrous height,
Whylom had been the king of the field,
And mochel mast to the husband did yield,
And with his nuts larded many swine;
But now the grey moss marr'd his rine,
His bared boughs were beaten with storms,
His top was bald and wasted with worms,
His honour decay'd, his branches sere."—*February.*

A more exact visible representation of the same object cannot be given, than by the figure of the old oak of Cowthorpe, Yorkshire, which measures sixteen yards in circumference within three feet of the ground, in Dr. Hunter's edition of Evelyn's "Sylva."



THE MONTH OF JULY.—ANGLING.

By Mary Roberts.

IZAAC WALTON tells us that the pleasant art of angling is somewhat like poetry—a thing not to be acquired, but rather natural to the mind; and that he who desires to be a good angler must possess both hope and patience. Therefore, playmates, let us sit awhile on this green bank, that our pulses may beat less quickly, and our minds possess somewhat of that quietness which Master Walton so much commends.

How calmly glides the deep clear river, now winding through a narrow channel with noble trees on either side, flinging their broad shadows on its tranquil waters; now emerging in its fulness and sweeping onward with a broad and ample current! Methinks it is not strange that boys should like to pass whole hours on the margin of such a river, not dreaming of their lessons, but calmly intent upon their quiet labours; for the mind must have an object, and the ardent youth who thus sits on the flower-dotted bank, with a long angling rod, could not brook the waste of unemployed time.

It is very pleasant to rest here, to feel the soft fresh air, and hear the cheerful hum of the industrious bee, gathering her honey-harvest among the wild thyme. Surely she teaches us a lesson that we may do well to follow. And now that we are cool and quiet let us begin the business of the day, each one choosing what part of the river he likes best for fishing; and let us make this green bank our place of meeting.

Well, here we are again with line and basket. Some of my playmates have been unsuccessful. Never mind, we shall do better another day. But Ernest and Augustus come with smiling faces and heavy loads. What have you got? A chub, a salmon, and plenty of trout. My old master, he who first taught me to love Virgil, used to say that a salmon was the king of fresh-water fish. He took me with him on a fishing excursion through North Wales, and we angled in the glorious lake of Llanberis, with a magnificent brotherhood of rocks grouping around and casting their broad shadows on the water, while the beams of the rising sun, silently and yet irresistibly, seemed to motion them to withdraw, till the whole surface of the lake rippled and sparkled with a brightness on which the eye could hardly rest. We soon filled our baskets, and then went on to the meeting of the Blue Pools; from thence to the river Gwynnan, wandering with a loud sound through the romantic village of Bethgellert, where, tradition says, Llewellyn had a palace,

and poor Gellert, his faithful dog, lies beneath four grey stones, in a meadow near the river. We explored the whole neighbourhood and sought out the haunts of the ancient bards, for, like Klopstock, my master never lost the freshness of his feelings. He loved all young people, and we loved him in return.

And much that good old man would tell concerning the migrations of the salmon. “They set forth,” he said, “from their haunts in all seas, whether belonging to the arctic or equatorial regions, and proceed with the utmost regularity. Ay, boys,” he would add, with an arch smile, “if you need an example of order and obedience to your mothers, take it from the salmon. Foremost of the migratory bands proceeds a full-grown matron, with a steady, yet rapid motion, followed by others of the same kind, two and two. Each pair in advance of those behind, from three to six feet. To these succeed the older members of the community; and last of all, the young fry, two and two, are frisking hither and thither,—no striving to get a-head of their mothers, no pushing among their superiors in age. Poets speak concerning the return of wandering birds, and associate with them the opening of flowers and the leafing of forest trees, but not less wonderful are the migrations of the finny tribes, and the peculiar provision which they make for their young. A solitary fish remains to guard the infant prodigy till sufficiently grown, when she returns with them to the sea. Thus wandering up the beds of rivers in order to deposit their eggs on the soft sand, myriads of the salmon genus diffuse plenty through the most inhospitable regions; and the periods of their arrival are so accurately defined, that the inhabitants designate their months by the names of different species. Strong winds sweeping along the cold and woodless shores, serve also an important purpose; they drive before them such whirlwinds of sand that the entrances into inland lakes are blocked up, and hence considerable numbers are detained. When, however, spring commences, and the inhabitants depend no longer on their rivers for support, the winds uniformly change, they scatter the sandy barriers, and the prisoners escape.”

Thus did our master teach us while resting beside many a rapid stream, and I loved to treasure up his words. “Let us,” he would often say, “seek to obtain knowledge concerning the wonders by which we are surrounded. You, my boys, will find such knowledge useful as you journey along the path of life; and I, an aged man, whose wanderings are well-nigh over, can find much pleasure in the memory of the past.”



THE WINE-MAKERS.

(Translated from the German by Alfred Sothern.)

ONCE upon a time there lived two children, named Kardel and Michel. Now Kardel was quite a stupid little thing, and it must be confessed that Michel was not over-clever. One day the children saw their mother drinking some wine.

“Mother,” said Kardel, “from what cow have you milked that wine?”

“You little stupid thing!” said his mother; “wine does not come from the cow, but from the vine.”

Michel shook his head, and said gravely, “ Nay, mother, I have been for the last half-hour lying under the vine, and I watched the berries continually, and although I kept my mouth open, as I always do, no wine ran into it.”

“ Ah !” sighed his mother ; and then she said, “ Why, you stupid head, the wine must be made ! First cut a bunch of grapes from the vine, and having done so, squeeze it with your foot ; then let the juice stand, and when, after a month’s time, you look at it, you will find it to be clear wine.”

A month after this, on a rainy day, the children came to their mother with a glass full of dirty rain water.

“ And what is that for ?” asked the mother.

“ Wine,” answered Michel, and laughed out of all countenance.

“ Do not talk so foolishly !” scolded the mother. “ Is wine to be put into that dirty stuff ?”

“ Oh, surely !” simpered little Kardel. “ Only it is not so clear as that which you drink. Remember, mother, a month ago you told us how wine was made, and we have made it exactly as you said. We went first to the vine-dresser, who cut us a bunch of grapes, and having trodden them under our feet, we let the juice stand, and on looking at it to-day, we found this wine exactly on the same spot where we had squeezed the grapes a month before.”

“ Ah !” sighed the mother, “ that little Michel should have such little sense, and that Kardel should be such a stupid thing !”

In another story you shall hear still more of the clever things which little Kardel and Michel did.



“DEAR SPECKLE-BACK.”

By Miss Sheridan Carey.

WITHIN an antique garden's bound
Where silver fountains play'd,
And flowers and trees begirt the paths
With beauty and with shade;

While here and there, thro' branch and
Bright Summer glory shed, [bole
A noble lady spoke her child,
And gently stroked its head:

“ Oh, Florence ! my beloved babe !
Throughout thy tender youth
Keep nothing from thy mother's ear,
And ever speak the truth ;

For, lo ! it is a thing that doth
Displease the Lord on high,
When children venture to deceive,
And shun their parent's eye :

And e'er the disobedient one
Provokes his holy ire ;
And anger from above, consumes
As with a flaming fire :

Now cherish this deep in thine heart,
And list while I relate
How *one concearnent* wrought, at length,
An infant's hapless fate.

I knew a little orphan girl,
An orphan from her birth,
Whose parents in the churchyard lay,
Beneath the mould'ring earth :

She was a fair and winning child,
With eyes of azure blue,
And sun-bright locks that on the breeze
Like silken meshes flew ;

Her budding cheek in softest bloom
The blushing rose array'd,
And when she laugh'd her ruby lips
Small ocean pearls display'd.

No kinsman nor no kinsman's friend
Could this poor baby claim,
And food and maintenance it owed
Unto an ancient dame :

And very lovely 'twas indeed
The little lamb to see,
At book, at work, at play, at *prayer*,
Beside the grandame's knee :

And oft the aged woman thank'd,
In tears, the Lord above,
That in her lonely years He gave
Her something still to love.

Thus, fondly rear'd, the nursling grew
And flourish'd like a flower
Sown in a genial spot, and fed
By many a soothing shower ;

Three years had glided o'er her head
Like one long summer day,
When sickness smote her rev'rend friend
And chased her strength away :

In bed for many a weary month
The feeble suff'rer pined,
Yet daily dwelt upon The Word,
To Heav'n's decree resigned.

Now Florence, love ; in early times
The Lord with bounteous grace,
Had prosper'd all the widow's ways,
And bless'd her dwelling-place ;

Enough she had for ev'ry need,
Some trifle, too, to spare,
And Want beneath her lowly roof
Ne'er domiciled with Care :

Behind her cot a garden lay,
Fenced round by birchen trees,
And rich with herbs, and roots, and
And many a hive of bees ; [flow'rs,

A dial, old and ivy-wreath'd,
Time's noiseless flight display'd ;
And, sown with tufts of silver bells,
A brook sweet music made ;

And in this green and sunny nook,
When summer noons were fine,
Beneath a goodly maple tree
The grandame used to dine.

New cheese and milk, and wheaten
On snow-white linen placed, [cakes,
With pulse and fruits and honeycomb
The board abundant graced;

'Twas here (forbade the fever'd room)
The gleesome Alice play'd,
Her primer conn'd, her worsted wound,
Her little kerchief made;

But ever at its waking hour
The loving infant crept,
On tiptoe, from its cradle nest,
To where the matron slept;

And, silent, looked with troubled mien
Upon that alter'd face, [arms
Then sought within those outstretch'd
Its cherish'd hiding-place.

And when the sun, midst clouds of gold,
Sank in the glorious west,
One moment more 'twas fondly snatch'd
Unto that yearning breast.

Now ofttimes as the widow dwelt
On that dear baby's face,
She fancied pining sickness prey'd
Upon its roseate grace.

And then, with keen alarms disturb'd,
She sent it from her side,
And would the chamber's heated air
With nervous tremor chide.

One morning, duly, to her couch
The treasured charge was led,
With piercing glance the widow gaz'd,
Then started up in bed.

Pale was the little shrunken cheek,
And dim the drooping eye,
'Oh, God!' the aged woman gasp'd
'My precious lamb will die!'

She felt its tiny arms—to her
They seem'd all worn and thin;
She look'd into its eyes—there danced
No joyous light within.

No reason could the nurse assign
For this sore, grievous change,
'The child was fed, and tended too,
(In truth 'twas passing strange!)

And for the health-bestowing breeze
The cottage hearth forsook,
And ever in the garden ground
Its daily food partook.'

This nurse, a poor but righteous dame,
Who fear'd God's holy word,
Had but to speak to gain belief
For all that she averr'd.

'Haste! help me forth, and seat me in
My good old easy-chair,
'Twould brace my languid heart again
To breathe the blessed air;

Nay! thwart me not, my friend, I pray!
Please Heaven! I would be well;
For sure there hangs about my babe
Some drear, unholy spell!

Now by her cheery hearth once more
That ancient dame was seen,
In coif and pinner white array'd,
With venerable mien.

The matin meal was straight prepared,
With pious thanks prefaced,
And then before the restless child,
Its bread and milk were placed;

With eager grasp and bright'ning brow
It took its bidden store,
Glanced round awhile, then quiet stole
Forth through the open door:

The grandame rose: 'Methinks 'tis
My darling thus should flee! [strange
I like it not!—God give me strength!
Oh, Mary, come with me!'

With weak but hurried step she trod,
The babe outstripp'd the wind,
With little porringer in hand,
Nor ever look'd behind:

It reached the bed of purple thyme,
Yet made no stop or stay,
The turfen seat, the maple shade,
But still went on its way;

And now quite at the garden's verge
With flow'ring shrubs o'erspread,
It pull'd the stem aside, and through
The fragrant covert sped.

All smitten with a deep amaze,
The trembling dames drew nigh,
And, shelter'd by the verdant fence,
Beheld with curious eye

A sylvan glade o'er-knit with trees,
Amidst whose branches peer'd
Blue glimpses of the summer sky,
By flitting sunbeam cheer'd;

The merry birds upon the boughs
Their trilling matins sung,
And every blade, and leaf, and thorn,
With beady dew was hung :

But nothing did the elders heed
The wood-lark's song to hear,
For on that elfin spot they gazed
With wonder and with fear;

There, seated on the tender grass,
They mark'd their wayward pet,
And by its side its porringer
And little platter set.

Now once and twice the fondling rapp'd
With spoon upon the ground;
A noise was heard far in the brake,
And then a rustling sound;

And lo ! with many a spiral fold,
Did from the coppice glide
A serpent, dazzlingly attir'd
In beauty and in pride;

Its glossy skin of green and gold,
With silver interlaced,
Seem'd studded with ten thousand gems
By cunning fancy placed;

And as it raised its jewell'd head
Full haughtily on high,
No Indian stone could match the light
Flash'd from that em'rald eye.

With wondrous gambolling it crept
Straight to the infant's feet,
And, fawning, joyously appear'd
Its visitor to greet.

And pleasure did the nursling child
All touchingly reveal,
While with the gentle snake it toy'd
And halved its little meal :

On this side of the porringer
The bonny lambkin sat,
And, lapping up its given share,
The serpent lay on that.

So lovingly blithe Alice fed
With her strange-chosen mate,
But ever, as the creature sought
To pilfer from the plate,

She softly tapp'd it on the head
And, lispingly, did chide,
' Fie ! Spettle-bat ! dear Spettle-bat !
Keep on de other thide !'*

In silence both the women watch'd
To mark how all would end,
And, lost in wonder, knew not what
The omen might portend.

Well, soon between the babe and snake
The porringer was clear'd,
And gladden'd by the social meal
The beauteous worm appear'd.

In many a sportive wreath it coil'd
Upon the fragrant moss ;
Now like a di'mond arrow threw
Its taper length across ;

Now, twisting to some poplar twig,
Swung lithely to and fro ;
Now vaulted through the liquid air,
Now, diving, hid below :

And round and round, and here and there
It wheel'd and leap'd and spun,
Now gleaming in the leafy shade,
Now glitt'ring in the sun.

All this the little Alice view'd
With many a frolic smile,
And clapp'd her tiny hands and crow'd
With very joy the while.

* " Fie, Speckle-back ! dear Speckle-back !
Keep on the other side !"

So wild and wilder wax'd the mirth
Of that fantastic guest,
As though its gratitude should be
With antic feat exprest;

Till, frenzy-wrought, it made a spring,
As flashing meteor quick,
And twining round the fearless babe,
Its face began to lick;

Now terror-struck the aged dame,
Scarce conquer'd from the first,
And, shrieking loudly, through the hedge
With sudden strength she burst.

Away, away, like lightning swift
The startled reptile flew,
And in the tangled thicket's depth
Was, instant, lost to view;

Nor ever paused the troubled dame
Till, tremblingly, she bore
Her darling child, clasp'd in her arms,
Safe to her cottage door.

She wildly sought for scathe or wound
With agony distress,
And on its tender face and limbs
Ten thousand kisses prest:

But not the slightest scratch appear'd,
No trace of hurt was seen;
And oft she glorified the Lord
That snake had harmless been.

But, mark me well! from that day forth
The infant pined away,
And, ere the summer leaves decay'd,
A stricken corpse it lay:

And oft before it died it smiled,
And in delirium cried—
'Fie! Spettle-bat! dear Spettle-bat!
Teep on de other thide!'

Now in its early coffin laid,
In little night-clothes drest,
So placid, pale, and pure, it seem'd
But newly rock'd to rest.

And varied rumours crept abroad
Of its mysterious death,
And peopleshook their heads and blamed
The serpent's blighting breath.

Well! 'twas the heart-wrung mourner's
At closing of the day, [wont,
To seek the chamber of the dead,
And there to watch and pray.

One eve the mellow harvest-moon
Shone o'er the tree-tops bright,
When to the stilly room she stole,
But shrunk aghast with fright,

There, nestled by the infant's cheek,
A famish'd serpent lay—
The same that in the forest glade
Once used to feed and play:

All stiff and motionless, it look'd
A form hewn out in stone;
And faded were its glorious hues,
In death for ever flown!

The marvel flew the country o'er,
And fill'd it with amaze,
And on the wondrous Indian snake
Lo! many came to gaze.

And some with pity mused upon
That wasted, perish'd thing,
Whose fangless jaws full plainly told
Thence could no venom spring;

All lifted up their hands and eyes,
But nobody could say
To whom the hapless snake belonged
Nor whence it chanced to stray.

So buried was the victim-babe
Within the churchyard lone,
And o'er the hallow'd spot was raised
A monumental stone,

On which wee Alice and the snake,
Fair graven, were descried,
With 'Spettle-bat! dear Spettle-bat!
Teep on de other thide!'

And never from the burial day
The grey-hair'd woman smiled,
But, habited in sable weeds,
Sat, sorrowing for her child;

And morn and eve, throughout the year,
A sadd'ning vigil kept,
And sought the little grave, and there
Bow'd down her head and wept."



THE ELM.

From "The Woodland Companion," by Dr. Aikin.

THE common elm is a large timber-tree of great beauty and use. It grows to a great height, and at the same time, if permitted, throws out expanded arms, so as to cover a large extent with its shade. Hence it is often planted singly or a few together in village greens, where it affords both a majestic object and a pleasant summer shelter. The elm is, however, often seen trained to a vast height with a single naked trunk, which mode of rearing destroys its beauty, though it better fits it for a particular use. In this state it is very common in hedge-rows, especially in the neighbourhood of London. Elms are not frequent in woods or forests, but are generally planted in avenues or in other artificial situations. The diversity in the form and site of elms is agreeably sketched by

Cowper, the poet, who, of all others, viewed natural objects with most taste and correctness. He first mentions them as growing by the river's side.

“ There, fast rooted in his bank
Stand, never overlooked, our favourite elms
That screen the herdsman's solitary hut.”—*Task*, b. i.

Then they are seen encircling a cottage upon a hill.

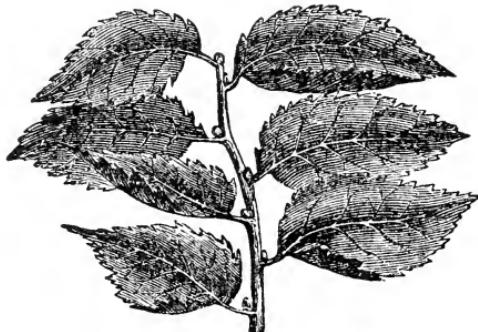
“ 'Tis perch'd upon the green-hill top, but close-
Environ'd with a ring of branching elms
That overhang the thatch.”—*Ibid.*

He also notices its hue, as of a deeper green than the ash.

The elm best loves an open situation and a black clayey soil. It bears transplantation well. It does not injure the grass beneath it; and its leaves are agreeable to cattle, and in some countries constitute a considerable part of their food. The ancients made great use of elms properly trimmed as props or supports for their vines; and the poets frequently allude to the *marriage* of these dissimilar plants, and the aid derived to the weak and fruitful vine by twining round the strong stem of her husband elm.

The wood of the elm is hard and tough, and useful for a variety of purposes. It is particularly serviceable for occasions which require its being kept constantly wet, as in the keels and planking beneath the water-line of ships, mill-wheels and water-works. It is likewise used for axle-trees, naves, gate-posts and rails, floors, dressers, blocks, &c. and it is very fit for the carved and ornamental works belonging to architecture.

There are several varieties of the elm, differing in the roughness and smoothness of their leaves, and manner of growth. A dwarf kind is employed for making tall hedges in gardens, or nursery grounds.





HISTORICAL SKETCHES.

By Mrs. James Whittle.

No. II.—THE LOMBARDS.

AMONG the various nations who contributed to the overthrow of the Roman empire, the Lombards were perhaps the people who did most to repair the evils which had arisen to Italy from the successive inroads of the northern hordes. The Allemanni, a tribe of Germans who dwelt between the Oder and the Danube, were the

first to penetrate into Italy. These barbarians were astonished and delighted with the beauty and fertility of the country ; dwelling themselves in a northern region, where the cold was excessive, in the midst of wild, trackless forests, and swampy, uncultivated plains, they regarded Italy as a kind of Paradise, with its rich fields, luxuriant vegetation, bright and cloudless sky, and warm sunny atmosphere. The beautiful cities, enriched with edifices of Roman magnificence, baths, circuses, amphitheatres, and temples, dazzled and bewildered these Northerns ; who, when they returned to their native country and related their tales of wonder, spread amongst their brethren and comrades a desire to go themselves and visit this land of enchantment. The love of war was the strongest feeling in the breast of the barbarians, and they eagerly seized on the hope of conquering this beautiful country. One by one the nations of the north descended into Italy, spreading ruin and terror around ; already had the Goths, Huns, Vandals, and many other tribes, joined in the work of destruction ; rushing down from the Alps like a torrent, they drove the affrighted natives before them, plundered cities, destroyed the noble buildings which adorned them, desolated the country, and then retired, giving place to fresh hordes of invaders. Italy fell a victim to these ruthless tribes, and at the time of which I now propose to write, this once fertile and beautiful country presented a scene of misery and desolation which can scarcely be imagined. The empire of Rome was overthrown, A.D. 476, by Odoacer, chief of the Heruli, who proclaimed himself King of Italy. Theodoric, an Ostrogoth, subsequently usurped the sceptre, A.D. 493, and by the introduction of wise and salutary laws, and his encouragement of agriculture and maintenance of peace, revived the fainting hopes of his subjects. Italy, after his death, was subdued by the arms of Justinian, emperor of the East, and remained for many years under the government of ministers appointed by him. One of these, Narses, having been treated with the cruellest ingratitude by the emperor, in revenge invited the Lombards to invade Italy, promising to yield it up to them on their first appearance—an offer too tempting to be rejected by this ambitious and warlike people.

But who were these Lombards ? Listen, and I will tell you a story of them, and of their king Alboin—of their strange manners and customs, of their cruelties and their virtues ; and from this you will see how widely barbarian life differed from that of civilised nations.

The Lombards, or Longobardi (as they were called from their long beards), came originally from the north of Germany, near the Elbe ; by degrees they migrated southwards, and fixed their temporary residence in Pannonia, a province to the north-east of Italy. Alboin, while still a boy, killed in battle the son of Turisund, the king of the Gepidæ, who was the mortal enemy of the Lombard nation. His youth had hitherto excluded him from joining in the banquets given by the chiefs in honour of the victories obtained over their enemies ; none being allowed to join in these festivities until they had been invested with their arms by the hand of a stranger king. Alboin, elated by recent victory and the death of his youthful antagonist, entered his father's tent, and prepared to take his seat amongst the warriors, when he was sternly reprimanded by his father and desired to withdraw. Stung to the quick at this public rebuke, he mounted his horse, and riding to the camp of the Gepidæ, presented himself before the king, who was overwhelmed with grief at the death of his son. With the blood of the child still warm upon his hands, Alboin claimed the rights of hospitality from the heart-stricken parent ; and so sacred were these esteemed among barbarians, that Turisund, stifling his own emotions, received him courteously, placed him beside himself in the vacant chair of his murdered son, and pledged him in the wine-cup. During the repast, Cunimund, the brother of the slain, roused by the presence of so bitter an enemy, and inflamed with wine, insulted the dauntless young Lombard. Swords flashed from their scabbards, and blood would soon have flowed, but for the interference of the king, who with calm dignity commanded silence, and claimed for his guest the protection to which his position as a stranger at their board entitled him ; with his own hand he invested him with the arms which had belonged to his son, and dismissed him with every mark of honour.

This act gained for Alboin the applause of his nation, and on his return he was hailed with shouts, and received as a conqueror ; to us it can only appear a cruel and wanton insult offered to an aged man, whose grey hairs and sorrow at least entitled him to respect. During his short sojourn in the enemy's camp, Alboin had fallen violently in love with Rosamund, the daughter of Cunimund, and determined at any cost to gain her for his wife. By the death of his father Alboin had become king, and proceeded in due form to make proposals for the hand of Rosamund ; these were spurned with indignation, the fair princess scorning to ally herself with the enemy of her country and the murderer of her uncle. Alboin, how-

ever, was not thus to be diverted from his purpose ; his peaceful overtures being rejected, he renewed the war with the Gepidæ, which had been suspended ; his arms were successful—with his own hand he slew Cunimund, and compelled the wretched Rosamund to become his reluctant bride. The scull of his vanquished foe was, according to the custom of the Lombards, converted into a drinking-cup and carefully preserved amongst the regal treasures, which were produced on occasions of great festivity.

Soon after this ill-fated marriage, Alboin, at the invitation of the treacherous Narses, descended into Italy. His progress there was triumphant ; those fair plains, still known by the name of Lombardy, yielded to this new invasion, almost without a struggle. Pavia alone offered a brave resistance to his arms ; for

three years it defended itself against the Lombards, until Alboin, exasperated by the protracted contest, swore an oath to massacre all the inhabitants as soon as they should fall into his power. Famine at length drove the city to despair, and the wretched people opened their gates to the victors. Alboin, breathing vengeance, rode at the head of his impatient troops to take possession of the city ; at the moment of passing beneath the gate, his horse became restive, stumbled, and nearly threw his rider. The incident impressed his mind deeply ; in the moment of triumph death had suddenly threatened him ; and, musing on the uncertainty of human events, the heart of Alboin was softened, and in gratitude for his preservation he not



only spared the brave people of Pavia, but fixed his regal court there.

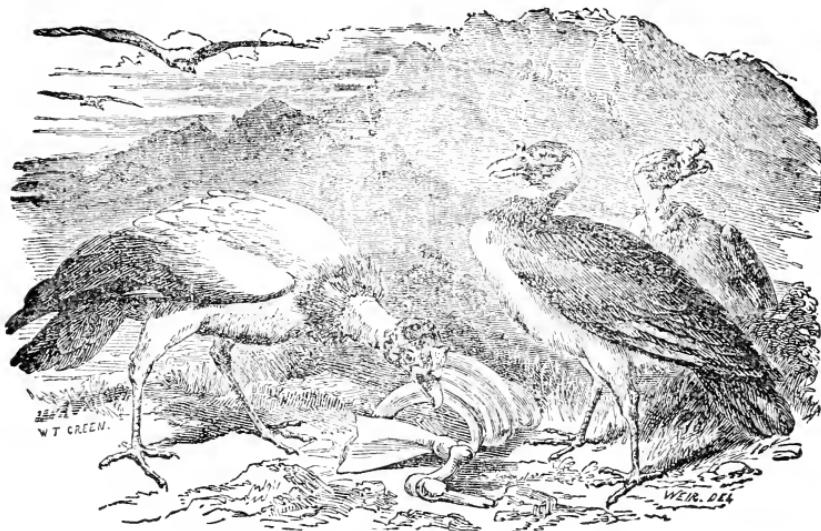
Rosamund had long writhed under her compulsory marriage, and sought with impatience an opportunity to avenge her wrongs; nor was it long delayed. Alboin, grown weary of a wife who hated and shunned him, lost no opportunity of insulting her. One night in the midst of a carousal, when wine had flowed abundantly and all were plunged in intoxication, Alboin, excited to madness, commanded his attendants to bring the scull of Cunimund, and having filled it to the brim with rich Falernian wine, drained it at a draught; then replenishing the fearful bowl, he ordered his cup-bearer to take it to Rosamund, and "bid her rejoice with her father." The queen stood aghast at the command; but, controlling her horror, she received the goblet with a shudder. "Let the will of my lord be fulfilled!" she said, touching it with her lips, but internally swearing at the moment that the insult should be repaid with the life-blood of the king. Her threat was speedily executed, and Alboin fell beneath the daggers of assassins employed by his wronged but guilty wife.

No sooner were the Lombards established in Italy than they began to improve the country: the lands so long neglected or desolated by war were once more brought into cultivation; peace was restored, and with it some degree of prosperity. One of their kings wisely summoned his nobles around him, and with their assistance framed a code of laws. Under the administration of the Lombards the north of Italy remained until the time of Charlemagne.

THE COTTAGER AND HIS LANDLORD

From the Latin of Milton.

"A peasant to his lord paid yearly court,
Presenting pippins of so rich a sort,
That he, displeased to have a part alone,
Removed the tree, that all might be his own.
The tree, too old to travel, though before
So fruitful, withered, and would yield no more.
The squire, perceiving all his labour void,
Cursed his own pains, so foolishly employed;
And 'Oh!' he cried, 'that I had lived content
With tribute, small indeed, but kindly meant!
My avarice has expensive proved to me,
And cost me both my pippins and my tree.'"—COWPER.



NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.

By Mrs. R. Lee.

No. I.—VULTURES

BIRDS which feed on flesh, or eat other birds, small quadrupeds, reptiles, and offal of various kinds, are called Birds of Prey, and form two sets, or groups—those which feed by day, and those which get their living by night: the first are called in English Diurnal, and the second Nocturnal, from the Latin words signifying day and night. All have four toes, strong talons, thick legs and thighs, sharply pointed and crook'd beaks, with a skin which covers the upper part, in which the nostrils are pierced, and which is sometimes coloured. They all have large, powerful wings, fly rapidly, and to great distances at one flight; and are among birds, what lions and tigers are among beasts.

Vultures are diurnal birds of prey, and, with one exception, have a part or the whole of the head and neck deprived of feathers; and these naked portions are often brilliantly coloured. Their beaks are crook'd at the end only, and are much more powerful than their claws, so that they chiefly tear their food with them; their feathers are strong, and closely set together; and their wings are so long, that when the bird walks it is obliged to spread them out, which makes it roll about in the most awkward and ludicrous manner. Like other birds of long flight, the breast-bone of vul-

tures is very large, and their merry-thought semicircular, both of which support their strong wings. Their sense of smell is very powerful, and they are able to scent their prey at a great distance; they hover round it for some time, making circles in the air; and when their brilliant eyes, which see things very far off, assure them that no enemy is near, they pounce upon it, and eat till they are so full that they can scarcely fly away. They often sit in a stupid state, so nearly approaching to insensibility, that they may be easily knocked down without making any resistance. If this were not a provision made for them by their all-wise Creator, we might be inclined to call them greedy; but they eat in this manner because they do not have opportunities of feeding often, and are obliged to swallow a quantity at one time, to supply their bodies with the necessary nourishment: an observation which may be applied to beasts as well as birds of prey.

Another propensity of vultures might be apt to make us call them disgusting birds, were it not that such habits were most valuable to human beings, in climates where the sun so soon causes every thing to become putrid—they eat all which is rotten and offensive that belongs to animal substances, and are often, in consequence, called the scavengers of the earth. They, however, were for this considered as blessings in ancient times, and were worshipped accordingly. Many have been found embalmed in the tombs of Egypt; but that practice was discontinued when the Mahometans became masters of the country, who only encourage them for the good they do in removing what is unwholesome.

Vultures are found in Asia, Africa, America, and the South of Europe. The largest of all is the Condor, which lives at a greater height than any other bird; for it places its habitation on the crests of the rocky mountains of that lofty chain in the New World called the Andes, immediately below the part where the snow never melts, more than four thousand eight hundred yards above the sea. It frequently measures above four yards from the tip of one wing to that of the other, when spread out; and the natives of the countries which it frequents have a peculiar cry, which always makes these birds display their enormous wings. Several condors will assemble together and attack and kill oxen, which has led to the story that they carry them off, which is impossible: but they really do take away kids, fawns, lambs, young llamas, and other weak animals, which several other vultures can also accomplish.

The King of the Vultures is a beautiful creature; the naked

parts of its head and neck are most exquisitely tinted with red and yellow ; its fleshy crest is red like that of a cock, and it has a ruff of soft feathers round that part of the neck where the plumage begins : it is about the size of a large turkey, but its body is of a longer shape.

A vulture lives among the Alps which is the terror of the inhabitants, as it is very voracious, and has been known to attempt to carry away little children ; it builds its nest in the highest and steepest rocks, and is the largest bird of prey in Europe. Its head is covered with feathers, and forms the exception we have already mentioned ; it has a tuft of bristles over each nostril and under its beak, and holds its wings half open when asleep. It has a cunning method of frightening animals which feed at great heights, such as goats and chamois, till they, in running away from it, fall over a precipice and are killed, and then it devours their carcases.

There is an old story among the fables of ancient Greece about a man called Prometheus, who is said to have ridiculed the heathen gods and goddesses of those times, and to have been so crafty and clever that he even deceived Jupiter. He made a man of clay, and gave him life by fire stolen from heaven, which he carried back to earth in a reed hidden in his bosom, and which so enraged the king of the gods that he desired Vulcan to make a woman in the same manner ; and the other heathen deities then gave her all the beauties and accomplishments which a mortal could possess : but besides these, Jupiter placed in her hands a box full of all the evils and vices of which mankind can be guilty, with orders to open it and let them out when Prometheus should marry her. Prometheus, however, knew better than to fall in love with this Pandora, as she was called, and she married his brother ; which put Jupiter into such a passion, that he caused Prometheus to be carried to Mount Caucasus and there chained to a rock, where a vulture was to feed upon his liver for thirty thousand years ; and yet, though always devoured, the liver was never to diminish. Prometheus, however, was released in thirty years by Hercules, who killed the vulture.

The great poet, Homer, in his "Iliad," makes Apollo and Minerva witness the single combat between the heroes Hector and Ajax, in the form of vultures :—

" Above them all
Exalted, Pallas and Apollo, pleased
Spectators both ; but, vulture-like in form,
Perch'd on the branches of the sacred beech."
COWPER'S *Homer's Iliad*, 6th Book.



SADDLER MÜLLER'S WENDEL.

By Mary Howitt.

PART I.—CHRISTMAS EVE.

THE final preparations for Christmas were made at Heinrich Müller's, the saddler's, who lived in the Hauptstrasse or high-street. The Christmas-tree was set up in the parlour behind the shop.

For days and days, nay, for weeks and months, the mother had been making preparations for this day, and the father had plentifully supplied the money. There were not in all the town merrier or heartier people than Saddler Müller and his family. His family consisted of himself, his wife, and his three boys, Fritz, Heinrich, and Wendel, or little Wendel, as he was always called. The ages of these boys were twelve, ten, and eight. All the town spoke well of them. They attended the Gymnasium, or grammar-school; and while the two eldest wore gold ear-rings, because they were to be tradesmen like their father, everybody had made up their minds, ever since little Wendel was born, that he was to be a student; and this, of course, would make him the gentleman of the family.

There was something very fascinating about little Wendel. He had his own way with everybody, and the love and admiration which his brothers had for him was quite beautiful. Fritz humoured him, Heinrich humoured him, his mother humoured him, and so did his father, but nobody ever could see that it did him any harm. There was no end to his fun and his good humour, and his kindness to everybody. All the saddler's boys were very healthy, good-looking lads, but Wendel was the handsomest; his long dark hair fell in rich curls on his shoulders, and his oval face looked very much like a face in some fine old picture. His mother always said that Wendel would be fortunate in life, and that, somehow or other, he would make himself and his family famous. His father for some time thought of making a soldier of him, and sending him into the Austrian service; but, luckily, he gave up that idea after awhile, and so Wendel began to learn Latin and Greek; and would be, everybody said, when he was a man, one of the famous professors in one of the Universities.

Just at the very moment when the Christ-kindchen, or Christ-child (who, by the by, was Tailor Uebele's little daughter, borrowed for the occasion), no sooner had she, I say, with her silver crown on her head, and her silver wings on her shoulders, rang her little bell

to summon all the family into the parlour, where the lighted-up Christmas-tree, laden with and overshadowing all the gifts, stood, than a loud knocking and ringing at the house-door announced a visitor. It was odd that anybody should come just then, and more especially when the snow was falling desperately, and the streets were already half snowed-up! It could not be Pelznickel, for he was far enough out of Germany by that time. Perhaps it might be Conrad Bach, the lame journeyman, come about some business, and now impatient to get back to his own poor Christmas-tree at home.

Saddler Müller rushed out to solve the mystery, and then those in the parlour heard a man's loud voice as the door opened, and a stamping of heavy shoes to kick off the snow, and they all recognised that it was no other than Diedrich Herz, landlord of the Golden Lion of Dürkheim, twelve miles off. Well, that was a surprise, and a very great one, for nobody thought of his coming!

Diedrich Herz was brother-in-law to the saddler, and was at any time a right welcome guest in his house; but what in the world was he come for now? Oheim, or uncle Herz, was warmly welcomed by the three boys, who were clamorous to shew him all their presents.

But Oheim Herz, good man! had brought bad news with him. Very bad news! The boys heard him tell their father and mother that the lawsuit was going on as desperately as ever; that he had seen Jurist Gemählin (the lawyer employed by the opposite party) that very day, and he had told him that the saddler's hard old enemy, who had been worrying him at law for five years, had commenced a new suit, and vowed now that he would not desist till he had ruined him. Now was not this bad news? And all this vexatious lawsuit was about a little vineyard, which six years ago the saddler had bought with a little spare money, and on which he had built a summer-house, hoping not only to have good wine out of his own vineyard but a deal of pleasure beside; and now the old enemy had set up a plea against the little summer-house, which he asserted stood on half a hand's breadth of his land, and which had cost the good saddler two hundred and fifty gulden to build; and now it must come down; yes, there was no doubt of it. Farmer Hardtman, the old enemy, who was as rich as a Jew, would never rest till he had ruined the poor saddler.

Was not that bad news for any man to bring to a decent family on a Christmas eve? There was no more merriment that night for any of them. Old Barbet and Fritz, with a lanthorn, took home little Christ-kindchen, the tailor's daughter, through

the snow ; and as she had an apron full of gingerbread and apples, and a pincushion in the shape of a boot, the bad news did not very much matter to her. The three boys left their parents and Oheim Herz to talk over the unpleasant news he had brought ; and then having put out all the Christmas candles that they might be lighted another night, went off quietly to bed.

They all slept in one room ; little Wendel's bed, of course, standing in the warmest corner, and being the prettiest of all three. They talked about the bad news which their uncle had brought. For years and years they had heard about this horrid lawsuit, and the wicked man, Farmer Hardtman, and his wicked lawyer, Jurist Gemählin. They had never seen Farmer Hardtman ; but what had they not heard about him ! He was very rich, and lived somewhere on the plain at a great Hof, as it was called, which means a farm or grange ; he employed a great many peasants, and, of course, he was a very hard master. He was not married, and never had been ; and that the boys supposed was because he was so wicked and could not get a wife : no woman lived in his house, excepting a poor niece, who was not young, and who was deformed and half blind, and that they fancied must be because they had used her so ill, and because all her life long she had been crying. He was a sort of dismal ogre to their imaginations ; and Fritz told his brothers that he remembered once when he was at Oheim Herz's, and went out with him somewhere in his wagon, he pointed out Farmer Hardtman's Hof in the distance, and that it looked like a very large and dismal place. Little Wendel said that he remembered when he was a very little child, and his mother had been shewing him the pictures in the great picture-bible, and telling him all about Jesus Christ and his goodness, and how strong, wicked men killed him out of malice and envy, he fancied that they must be just like Farmer Hardtman ; and he fancied, that if Farmer Hardtman had had any children he would have said to them, when they were reading in the Gospel, " Now, my dears, you understand that Jesus Christ was a very wicked man, and that healing the sick and raising the dead were wicked actions, and it was very good of Pontius Pilate and Judas Iscariot to betray and crucify him ; and you must always do as they did ! "

These Wendel said had been his thoughts about Farmer Hardtman when he was a very little child ; he did not think so now, exactly ; but of this he was sure that he was a very wicked and cruel man, and that he could have no pleasure in doing a good

action when he went on as he did, and was plaguing them all so about a little vineyard and a little summer-house, and said now that he would never rest till their father was ruined. Yes, there was no doubt of it, Farmer Hardtman was a wicked man ; and if Jesus Christ had been living now, he dared to say he would have crucified him !

The boys all agreed that he was a very wicked man ; and the saddler and his wife, and Diedrich Herz, all three came to a very similar conclusion over their supper of liver-sausage and potato-salad.

PART II.—HUNTING FOR THE SEVEN-SLEEPER.

At Whitsuntide the boys had a holiday, and they went to spend it with Oheim Herz at the merry Golden Lion. That was a pleasure ! At the Golden Lion, where there was always a something going on, where their mother had lived when she was a child, and where the old storks that then had a nest in the roof had one still, coming and going regularly spring and autumn,—was not that a Whitsuntide pleasure ! And then their uncle would take them to the vineyard, which had cost their father so much trouble, and where the summer-house stood, which the law had decided should come down, and which stood on the very borders of wicked Farmer Hardtman's land ; and they would throw stones on his land, they vowed, just to vex him, though he would never know about it.

The sun shone splendidly that pleasant Whitsuntide. The apple-trees by the road-sides and in the orchards were all in blossom, and the peasants, men and women and children, were at work in the fields. The old father stork sat on the roof-tree, with one leg tucked up, as the boys came in sight of the house ; and Oheim Herz and his wife, who had no children of their own, made a wonderful rejoicing over them when they got in.

Little Wendel had set his mind on having a seven-sleeper. A seven-sleeper, you must understand, is a sort of very little squirrel, not much bigger than a mouse—a little innocent creature that sleeps all winter, and in summer builds its nest and rears its young in the woods. Of all things in this world, Wendel wished for a seven-sleeper, which he might take out of the nest when quite young, tame, and teach to love him ; and it was therefore agreed, that when they went to their uncle's they would go to the woods a few miles off to hunt for one. Neither uncle nor aunt saw any objection to it: why should they ? And after they had been a day or

two they set off to the wood, which was six miles off, taking their dinner with them.

It was a wood of many miles in extent to which they went, and I only wish I could give you an idea of what a pleasant wood it was. I have been there myself, and therefore I know; in some parts it was all beech-wood, and there the ground was dry and leafless; and the young, tender leaves made a canopy overhead, as if of the palest green silk; after awhile there were long stretches of pine-wood that looked solemn and mysterious, and tall, thin grasses grew below, and banks of bluebells shelving to the sun; and then there were little rivulets of water that ran murmuring on among roots and stones, and all kind of lovely water-plants grew there, and kingfishers and dragon-flies darted about; but nowhere could they find a seven-sleeper's nest. No, it was not the right kind of wood for that! It was coppice-wood which they needed, where hazels and young ash-trees grew, and in search of such they went on and on a far greater distance than they had any idea of, and until it was getting quite late in the afternoon. They were many miles from the Golden Lion, but they were not inclined to turn back; nor, indeed, did they think about it; and then, just before sunset, they entered the very kind of wood they wanted, and before they had gone very far, little Wendel joyfully exclaimed, "There is one! there is one!" and pointed to the fork of a young elm, and, without waiting for any opinion from his brothers, hastily climbed the tree.

But he was mistaken; it was not a seven-sleeper's nest, and, what was much worse, by some sad mischance his foot slipped, and he fell from the forked bough to the ground. Could his brothers have caught him in their arms they would; but no! down to the hard, hard ground he came, with a force that made the other two boys feel absolutely sick. It was a terrible cry that he uttered, and writhed his poor body as if in agony, and then lay still and pale as death. His brothers thought he was dead; but he had fainted.

I will not attempt to describe to you the dreadful hour and half which succeeded this time. Evening had set in; they were a long way from any road, and poor Wendel's groans and fainting fits almost drove his brothers out of their minds. They were so afraid that he would die in the wood; they were so very sorry for him, and they did not know how to do him any good. In about an hour and a half, however, they had managed to carry him to a road about a mile off; but where the road led to they did not know, for they



had never been there before in all their lives. Little Wendel tried to bear his dreadful pain patiently, but he hardly could, and his brothers cried bitterly because they could neither bear it for him nor lessen it in any way.

It was now quite dusk, the stars came out overhead, and they could neither see house nor human being near them.

“Oh, that it had been I!” exclaimed Fritz.

“Oh, that it had been I!” exclaimed Heinrich, without knowing what his brother had said, for they could think about nothing but poor Wendel.

The road where they were was one which diverged from the wood into the open country beyond, and on each side it was bordered with walnut-trees. In ancient times a large stone crucifix had stood at this angle of the road, but now nothing remained of it but the shaft, and the broken stone steps, and a stone bench near. The boys took off their coats and made as good a bed as they could for their little brother, and looked up and down the road in the hope of somebody coming.

Before long they had the comfort of hearing the jingling sound of a light wagon drawn by one horse coming on, and as it neared they could just see that it was driven by a man in a large cloak and a cocked hat. They ran forward to meet him, and could hardly tell their sorrow. “Would he please to help them! Would



he please to take up poor Wendel, for they feared that he would die!"

Without at all understanding what they wanted, the man descended from his wagon, and then seemed all at once to understand and to take into his heart all their great sorrow. He stooped down over Wendel, stroked his cheek, and called him "armes wörmchen," which, though literally, is "poor little worm," means, "poor little dear creature," spoken in the very tenderest manner.

It would have done any body good to have seen the man take off his cloak, and with some hay that he had in the wagon make a bed for Wendel, whom he then lifted up lovingly in his arms, as if he had been his own child, and lay him in it. The boys said that they wanted to go to the Golden Lion at Dürkheim. It was eleven miles off, the man said, and they must never think of that; he would take them, therefore, to his own house, which was only a mile off. Wendel groaned as the wagon began to rattle off again, and then the man, sighing forth his "armes wörmchen," went on at a foot's pace, the two boys sitting beside Wendel, and crying for pity and fear.

The boys hardly noticed what sort of a place the man drove them to, for they were not in a humour to think of any thing but their brother. However, when they got inside, they found themselves in a large *stube*, or parlour, where a lame, delicate-looking

woman, with a very friendly countenance, came forward to meet them from her spinning-wheel. She called the man *Oheim*, or uncle, and when she saw that he was carrying in a suffering child, she rushed to an inner room without bidding, and brought out several pillows and laid them on a wooden sofa to make a bed. Wendel uttered a loud cry as they laid him down, and again fainted. The man then raised him, and laying him across his own large knees, rested his head upon his breast, and the boys both saw with what kind pity he looked down upon him. Had he been his own child he could not have been more tender with him; the woman mixed brandy and water, which the man gave him with a teaspoon, calling him the while affectionate names, and saying he would soon be better.

When Wendel was a little revived, the man ordered his niece to make his own bed ready, and there he would carry him. His bed was the one in the next room, so he was soon laid upon it; and the man called him his little lamb, and his jewel, and said he would send for the doctor, and he would soon be well.

They sent for the doctor, and fortunately met him only a mile or two off on the road. The boys knew the doctor; they had often seen him at the Golden Lion; nay, at one time he had attended their own family, and might always have done so had he not offended their father by saying that Farmer Hardtmann was not a bad man, and that he wished the quarrel might be made up. He seemed very much astonished to see them there, but he did not say why.

Poor little Wendel's leg was broken, and that was the thing of first importance now. So he and the goodman of the house set about attending to it, and the woman waited on them; and everybody spoke so pityingly and so lovingly to little Wendel that he did all he could to bear the horrible pain without crying much.

When the leg was set and he had taken a composing draught which the doctor mixed, and which the goodman of the house had given him to drink, the woman said she would sit up all night with him; and then the two boys began to think that they ought to set out to the Golden Lion, with the bad news to *Oheim Herz*. While they were considering with themselves what they had best do, they heard the doctor and the master of the house talking together.

"Yes," said the doctor, "as sure as you are a living man that is Saddler Müller's youngest lad."

"Gott bewahr!" exclaimed the man; which means, "Heaven forbid."

The doctor then abruptly turned to the boys and said that he had another patient to visit some miles further on, but that he would come and see Wendel early in the morning, and then take the two in his one-horse chaise to their uncle at the Golden Lion.

The boys were in the strangest perplexity. The idea had come upon their minds that they were in the house of the wicked Farmer Hardtman, and that this was he. There was J. H. on the stove; and there was J. H. on the carved back of the great walnut chair; and his name was Johannes Hardtman, that they knew. And now a black cloud seemed to have settled upon his face; he had never spoken one single word since his exclamation at the doctor's words. He sat before them and ate his supper gloomily, as if in brooding wrath. What would be the end of it? They did not dare to speak to each other, but their thoughts were very much the same. Suppose he should turn savage on poor little Wendel? Suppose a thousand dreadful things! They looked at him, and a shade had evidently settled on his countenance; it was not the open, compassionate countenance that it had been. Oh, that some one were but near to tell them what they ought to do! Those were their thoughts as they sat side by side on the wooden sofa, with their hands on their knees, as quiet and old-fashioned as could be. So they sat thinking and full of trouble, until they both fell fast asleep; and when they awoke they found themselves in a bed-chamber, laid on a bed, though not undressed. All at once the strange and sad events of yesterday came to their mind. Poor Wendel's leg was broken, and they were at Farmer Hardtman's; and Farmer Hardtman it was who had carried and soothed poor little Wendel, and on whose bed he was laid. They found a Bible in the room, and in it was written "Johannes Hardtman, given to him by his dear mother." Surely, after all he could not be such a very bad man!

Wendel was feverish, and had passed a very restless night; and the woman said that her uncle had never been in bed, nor had had a wink of sleep; he had been with Wendel most of the night. The two boys sat down and cried; they were again overcome with anxiety and distress. The doctor came, and he looked very grave. Wendel, he said, was very ill; the house must be kept very quiet, and he must be well nursed. Just then Farmer Hardtman came in, and hearing the last words, he walked up and down, saying;

“Ja ! ja ! ja ! ja !” which means “yes, yes,” in a very gruff voice. The doctor said he had sent the news to the Golden Lion, but that he should stop an hour or two to see how Wendel went on. That being the case, Farmer Hardtman said the boys must get ready to go with him ; he said that they must not go into Wendel’s room lest they should disturb him ; and he seemed so short and stern with them that they dared not disobey him. They mounted therefore into his green wagon as he bade them, and without a word away they drove.

Before going to the Golden Lion, however, he drove up to Jurist Gemählin’s and sent for him to the door : the boys now heard him say, that he would have an end put to the lawsuit ; that he did not care about it now ; he was willing to lose all the costs, and the sooner it was ended the better. Jurist Gemählin must have thought that the farmer was gone stark mad, he looked so astonished ; but Farmer Hardtman did not care for that either, so repeating what he had said, and asking the lawyer if he understood, he drove off, looking as if all the cloud was at once gone from his countenance and nothing but sunshine remained. The boys wished so very much that they might have thanked him, for they understood every word ; and so they might have done, for the farmer would have taken it very well, only they did not know it. However, all this was pleasant enough : the vexatious lawsuit was at an end, the summer-house might stand, their father could enjoy his vineyard, and Farmer Hardtman, after all, was a good man. There wanted nothing now but that dear little Wendel were quite well.

Both bad and good news soon reached the saddler’s, and in a very few days Mrs. Sattlerin Müller was sitting on one side of little Wendel’s bed, and Farmer Hardtman was standing on the other, with a little seven-sleeper in his cocked-hat, which he had given a boy half-a-florin to catch in the wood. The first time that little Wendel went out was in Farmer Hardtman’s green wagon ; the farmer drove them, and his mother went with them. They went to eat sour milk, strawberries, and to drink coffee in the summer-house at the vineyard ; and Saddler Müller and the two boys were there, and Oheim Herz and his wife from the Golden Lion, and it was the happiest little party that ever met on a summer’s day.

There was now an end of all disunion. In after years, whether little Wendel belonged to Farmer Hardtman or to his own family it was difficult to say ; both claimed him, and the claim was a bond of love between them. His mother had said truly ; Wendel was born to be fortunate—he was born to be a spirit of love and reconciliation.

THE MOTHER'S GRAVE

A CHILD'S LAMENTATION.

By Miss Sheridan Carey.

"I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me."—*Job xxx. 20.*

Who lies beneath this verdant tomb,
Where violets scatter deep perfume,
Where ivy creeps and pansies bloom?

My Mother!

The green grass waves above thy bed,
Light is the turf that hides thine head,
And soft the odour o'er thee shed,

My Mother!

The church bell tolls upon the breeze,
Full gaily hum the summer bees,
And blithe birds carol on the trees,

My Mother!

Sweet is the apple-orchard near,
Sweet murmurs by the mill-stream clear,
Sweet in the corn the lark to hear,

My Mother!

With golden buds the moor is bright,
Fair, fair the wheat-field to the sight,
And clothed the hills in purple light,

My Mother!

Thou canst not hear, thou canst not see,
The mill, the brook, the bird, the tree;
The merry day is night to thee,

My Mother!

For thee no more the stream shall flow,
The orchard bloom, the heather blow;
Thine eyes are closed, thine head lies low

My Mother!

Now oft beneath the walnut-tree
Where first I tried mine A, B, C,
And strove to reckon one, two, three,

My Mother!

I take my little garden-chair,
When afternoons are fine and fair,
But vainly hope to find thee there,

My Mother!

Ah! no one now, all kind and good,
Tells stories of "Red Riding Hood,"
Or sings "The Children in the Wood,"

My Mother!

Blind Ellen came the other day,
Her weekly rent she had to pay,
But wiped her eyes and crept away,

My Mother!

All—all is changed; 'e'en puss no more
Runs round and round upon the floor,
But pining watches at the door,

My Mother!

And weary is the live-long day,—
No joyous talk, no gladsome play!
Oh! would thou wert not gone away,

My Mother!

I left my father near the stile,
Kingcups I went to seek the while,
Pale was his cheek and faint his smile,

My Mother!

I strove to coax him forth to play,
So hid behind the tombstone gray
Then peep'd;—but he's no longer gay,

My Mother!

Last night he took me on his knee,
And, gazing mournfully on me,
Pray'd God my Father fond to be,

My Mother!

And when to cheer him all I tried,
Nought he to aught I said replied,
But wept and turn'd his head aside,

My Mother!

Yet ev'ry eve both he and I
Come here to talk of times gone by,
And sit beside thy grave and cry,

My Mother!

And oft we call upon thy name:
Ah, me! when once we did the same,
Who sweetly smiled and swiftly came?

My Mother!

Now, now the moaning wind sweeps by,
And waves the poplar boughs on high,
But ah! no voice makes fond reply,

My Mother!

They tell me thou art gone to Gon,
That 'tis but dust beneath the sod,
That Death's "a path which must be
trod,"

My Mother!

And when I raise my searching eyes
I think I see thee in the skies,
Till tears all blindingly arise,

My Mother!

Oh! had I wings I'd fly to thee,
And, with my father, would we be
In heaven a happy family,

My Mother!

Then let me read Gon's book with care,
And think betimes of praise and pray'r,
That I, one day, may join thee there,

My Mother!



The Church Stile.

THE CHURCH STILE

THIS little picture is engraved from a pencil-drawing by the late Sir Augustus Callcott. The "Playmate" intends to enrich his pages now and then with the works of Ancient and Modern celebrated Painters, both English and foreign, that their much-honoured names may grow familiar to his comrades.

A Companion to the beautiful Drawing, "Muscipula," (given recently), by Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a copy (by permission) of Mr. Mulready's "Wolf and the Lamb," will soon be forthcoming.



THE NATURAL HISTORY OF BIRDS.

By Mrs. R. Lee.

No. II.—EAGLES.

No birds have been more celebrated or talked of than eagles, which are esteemed the noblest of all the feathered race. This can scarcely be accounted for, unless it be for their majestic manner of flying, their grand beauty, and their strength. Not only have

they been sung of by poets, but they have been made the symbols of daring and courage in various ways. The Romans carried eagles on their standards ; they have always been one of the signs of imperial power, and are found in many ancient coats of arms, which were granted to the bearers for some valorous exploits.

Eagles are among those birds of prey which feed by day, and besides the usual term of *Diurnae*, given to them in consequence, they are, in spite of their kingly character, called ignoble, because they are never, like some other birds of prey, used for hunting. Their beaks are straight in the upper part, very strong, and only curved at the point, which is very sharp ; their strong legs are more or less covered with feathers, their talons are very powerful, and are often called pounces. Like the vulture, their eyes look sideways, and are remarkable for their brilliancy. They (and, in fact, all other birds) have a third eyelid, which they can, when they please, draw over their eyes from the innermost corner ; and it is probably this protecting skin which enables them to bear a great quantity of light without being dazzled : and because people have delighted in giving extraordinary powers to the eagle, they have converted this into the fable that it always flies in the face of the sun, and can look at that luminous body without blinking.

The colours of these birds vary in the different shades of brown, black, and white, and sometimes all three tints are to be found in the same bird. They build their nests on high rocks and mountains, and in these eyries, as they are called, missing articles (stolen from man) have been occasionally found by the daring adventurer who has climbed up to them.

The Imperial Eagle has the longest wings, and many exaggerated stories are told of its strength and power. The largest of all is the great Harpy of South America, which is said to be so strong that it will split a man's skull with one stroke of its beak. It feeds principally upon storks, but has been often seen to carry away fawns and young lamas. Generally speaking, however, the eagles of warm climates are smaller than those which inhabit the north ; those known in Africa are not much bigger than crows, and are black and white ; and a very diminutive one lives in the East Indies, which is consecrated by the Brahmins to their god Vishnu. The Fishing Eagles, so called because they prey upon fish, abound in the north, and are of considerable size ; but all kinds will pursue small birds and young animals : they do not, however, like the vulture, prefer dead flesh.

In mythology, the eagle is termed the bird of Jupiter, and is said to have fed this heathen god with nectar when he was young. For this reason it was always a favoured attendant upon him, was employed in carrying his messages and conveying his lightning, and it is often represented as grasping the lightning in its talons. An eagle is said to have borne the beautiful shepherd Ganymede up to heaven, when Jupiter wanted to make him his cup-bearer ; and Hebe, the goddess of health and youth, always had one near to her. Both of these favourites of Jupiter were ordered by him to feed his eagles, and this story has occasioned those beautiful engravings which we often see on the stones set in rings and seals which have been preserved from those days. Ancient sculpture also repeats the same story.

A friend of ours, who had very large gates to his stable-yard, was constantly liable to the entrance and petty thefts of the children of the village where he lived, and many an idle little rogue did he find on his premises, who had obtained access by slipping unperceived through this entrance. He had dogs, but the children soon made friends with them, and passed them unmolested. At last this gentleman purchased a pair of the Golden, or common Eagles, and chained one on each side of the gate. At first no one liked to pass them, but as the fierce guardians became accustomed to those employed in the yard, they were secured from their attacks. Strangers, however, never could bribe or coax them into peace, or perhaps they were thought the more dangerous from their appearance than they were in reality ; at all events, intruders were kept at a distance. One of the eagles broke his chain and flew away, but was soon caught again in a high tree, in which the remaining portion of the chain attached to its leg had become entangled.

We will conclude this account with Thomson's beautiful description of the kingly bird :—

“ High from the summit of a craggy cliff,
Hung o'er the deep, such as amazing frowns
On utmost Kilda's shore, whose lonely race
Resign the setting sun to Indian worlds,
The royal eagle draws his vig'rous young,
Strong pounced and ardent with paternal fire ;
Now fit to raise a kingdom of their own,
He drives them from his fort, the tow'ring seat
For ages of his empire, which in peace
Unstain'd he holds ; while many a league to *sea*
He wings his course, and preys in distant isles.”



TASSO AND HIS SISTER.

By Mrs. Hemans.

SHE sat where on each wind that sighed
 The citron's breath went by,
 While the deep gold of eventide
 Burned in the Italian sky. [close
 Her bower was one where daylight's
 Full oft sweet laughter found,
 As thence the voice of childhood rose
 To the high vineyards round.

But still and thoughtful at her knee,
 Her children stood that hour,
 Their bursts of song and dancing glee
 Hushed as by words of power. [gazed
 With bright, fixed, wondering eyes, that
 Up to their mother's face, [raised,
 With brows through parting ringlets
 They stood in silent grace.

While she, yet something o'er her brow
 Of mournfulness was spread,
 Forth from a poet's magic book
 The glorious numbers read,
 The proud, undying lay, which poured
 Its light on other years :
His of the gifted pen and sword,
 The triumph and the tears.

She read of fair Erminia's flight,
 Which Venice once might hear
 Sung on her glittering seas at night
 By many a gondolier.
 Of him she read who broke the charm
 That wraps the myrtle grove—
 Of Godfrey's deeds—of Tancred's arm,
 That slew his paynim love.

Young cheeks around that bright page
 glowed,
 Young holy hearts were stirred,
 And the meek tear of woman flowed
 Fast o'er each burning word ;
 And sounds of breeze, and fount, and
 leaf,
 Came sweet each pause between ;
 When a strange voice of sudden grief
 Burst on the gentle scene.

The mother turned ; a wayworn man,
 In pilgrim garb, stood nigh ;
 Of stately mien, yet wild and wan—
 Of proud, yet restless eye ;

But drops that would not stay for pride
 From that dark eye gushed free,
 As, pressing his pale brow, he cried,
 " Forgotten ! even by thee !

" Am I so changed ?—And yet we two
 Oft, hand in hand, have played.
 This brow hath been all bathed in dew
 From wreaths which thou hast made.
 We have knelt down and said one prayer,
 And sung one vesper strain ; [care
 My thoughts are dark with clouds of
 Tell me those words again.

" Life hath been heavy on my head,
 I come a stricken deer,
 Bearing the heart midst crowds that
 bled
 To bleed in stillness here."
 She gazed till thoughts that long had
 slept
 Shook all her thrilling frame ;
 She fell upon his neck and wept,
 And breathed her brother's name.

Her brother's name !—and who was *he* ?
 The weary one,—the unknown,
 That came the bitter world to fice—
 A stranger to his own.
 He was the bard of gifts divine,
 To sway the hearts of men—
 He of the song for Salem's shrine,
 He of the sword and pen.

THE MONTH OF AUGUST.

By Mary Roberts.

THE village seems deserted. No children on the green running races with one another, or playing at hunt-the-slipper on the smooth turf. No old men resting beneath the memorial-tree, sunning themselves, and talking with feeble voices, like the aged men of Troy, compared by Homer to grasshoppers ; neither is there the sound of the spinning-wheel beside the open cottage-door, with its rustic porch and clustering hops. All are away to the harvest-field. Let us go there too. We are bidden guests at Farmer Drayton's, and our holiday will pass merrily among the reapers.

" Good morning ! Goody. Where are you going with your

troop of rosy children, all glee and gossip?" "To the harvest-field, young masters. 'Tis a pleasant time, that comes but once in the year, and we make the most of it. My master was out before the sun, reaping in the field beside the river; but I had to dress the children and get his dinner, and that makes me late." "Good day, then; we will not hinder you." Away she goes half running, the children out of breath with delight. They have turned into Johnson's field. Let us follow them. There they are with twenty or thirty others, gathering the scattered ears, as Ruth gathered them on the plains of Bethlehem. Look at Goody! How diligently she is picking up the ears! The children, too, are all helping. Before the season is over, they will collect at least three clear bushels of wheat; and if the weather prove showery, and the waggon is hurried to the barn, they will obtain a larger quantity.

Farmer Johnson is at the furthest end, watching his reapers. He looks well pleased, and with reason, for the rustling corn stands thick and the men work cheerfully. The Lord of the Field (for such the chief reaper is called), heads the long line of farming-servants. When he clasps the opposite ears in his strong arms, they clasp theirs also; when he thrusts in his sickle, they do the same; and there is presently laid low a wide extent of grain, with its garniture of flowers,—the corn-cockle, and scarlet-poppy, sweet basil, and marjoram, herbs Robert and Christopher, Cicily and William—names by which the old simplers commemorated worth or friendship, or the villagers of other days associated with the memory of benefactors, whose skill and kindness might be shadowed forth in the qualities of their favourite plants. It seems as if those who bind up the sheaves have some pleasant or grateful thoughts connected with the prostrate flowers, for a few are carefully taken from among the rest and put aside.

Before the young wheat springs up, we shall hear, I fancy, the church-bells ringing merrily, for there are John Grey and Susan Bell hard at work. He has just pulled the prickly stems of the woolly thistle from the corn she is about to bind. Farmer Johnson often tells the men and women to mind their work; but he takes no notice of John and Sally, though many a kindly word passes between them, for he knows that more industrious and well-conducted young people are nowhere to be found.

Hark to that loud holla! What is it? The last shout of summer from Drayton's farm, on the hill side. The men are shouting at the top of their voices.

“ We have done, and well done ; and pleased our master too !”

This is customary in the West of England, when the loaded waggon passes for the last time through the gate, and the field is left to the gleaners. Had we been earlier, we might have seen the good old man fling many a liberal handful from the sheaves, for such is his habit, and he loves to repeat the kind admonition given to the Jewish husbandman, “ Thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy fields ; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger.”

What a bustle must have been at the old man’s house to-day ! The placing of the long tables, and decking them with flowers ; the cheerful looks of the farmer’s wife, and the merry faces of the damsels ; the baking and roasting, frizzling and frying ; the hurrying hither and thither, the tumbling over the house-dog, and the flying of the cat before them ; and ever and anon would be heard the quiet, grateful words, with which the farmer expresses the gladness of his heart, according to his custom. There will be no riotous doings at his harvest-home ; no anxious wives and frightened children in the cottages, nor aching heads next day. Well, now, let us be gone : we shall be in good time for the mead and home-baked cake.

There sit the farmer and his wife at the head of the oak table, like the lord and lady of the May in olden times, and right and left many an old neighbour and young friend ; his children too, and all the farm-servants, with, their families. Right merry are they. Harmless jests go round ; and some sly looks and questions as to whether the cottage near the mill-pond is taken. Now all is quiet ; the men and their wives look serious, and the young ones cease giggling. The farmer rises reverently, and, doffing his cap, thanks the Giver of all Good for the “ blessing of an abundant harvest.” Then taking up the words of the harvest shout, he tells his men, “ That they have done, and well done ; and pleased their master too ;” and he wishes them long life, and the coming round of many a glad harvest-home.

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